

CHAPTER 3 – AREA DIRECTION

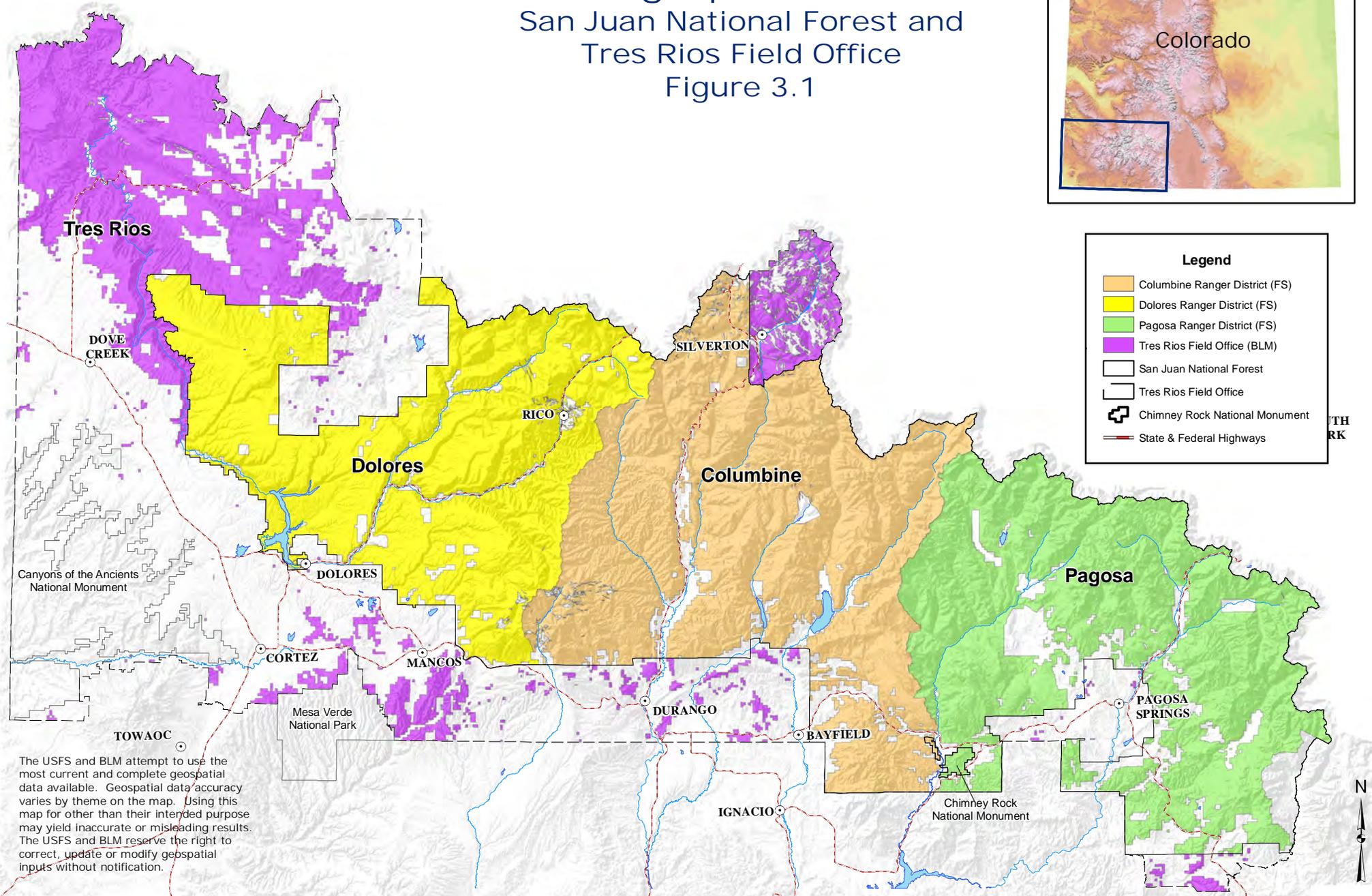
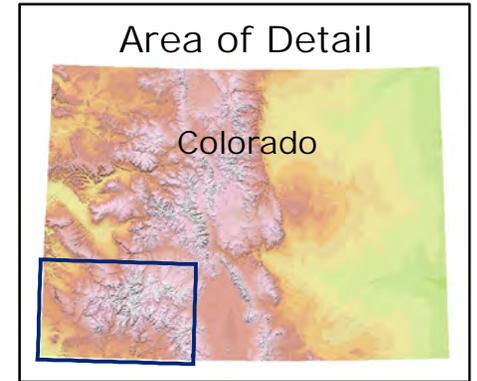
This chapter contains management direction for geographic areas, management areas (MAs), special areas and designations on TRFO and SJNF lands that have unique resources or management conditions. Four geographic areas are identified that describe the social, economic, and environmental settings of the TRFO and the three administrative ranger districts of the SJNF. MAs, which apply only to SJNF lands, describe the intensity of management, overall appearance and activities that can be expected within each MA. Specially designated lands are formal designations within each agency, including suitable WSR, RNAs, ACECs, and several other special designations. Also included in this chapter is direction for other areas with unique resources and management conditions such as lands managed for wilderness characteristics, the Dolores River Canyon, and the HD Mountains. All areas described in this chapter are identified on associated maps.

In addition to desired conditions and objectives, many of the areas in this chapter include “allowable use” tables. These tables portray the suitability determinations made under the grazing, timber, and travel programs in Chapter 2 as they apply to specific areas, and also identify additional uses that are listed as allowable, restricted, or prohibited. Restricted activities are those that are allowed, but may only be allowed during certain times of the year, within specific areas, or under specific conditions. The activities in the tables are described below.

- **Fire Managed for Resource Benefit:** This activity includes managing natural fires in order to achieve a management objective and/or a desired condition. Wildfire is only part of an overall appropriate response. The application of fire managed for resource benefit will always depend on site-specific conditions, current and predicted future weather, and fuel conditions.
- **Prescribed Burning:** This activity includes igniting fires in order to achieve a management objective and/or a desired condition. Managed active burning will be prescribed and monitored to burn at specified intensities over a defined area.
- **Mechanical Fuels Treatments:** This activity includes any method to alter live or dead vegetation with hand tools or by machine (including thinning with chainsaws or any commercial machine, shredder, chipper, or similar equipment) to break up fuel connectivity, including removal of fuels from treatment sites.
- **Timber Production:** This activity involves the removal of wood fiber for commercial-utilization purposes. Harvesting for timber production purposes is scheduled and regulated.
- **Timber Harvesting as a Tool:** This involves the removal of wood fiber to achieve management objectives and/or desired conditions. If an area is suitable for timber harvesting as a tool but not suitable for timber production, timber harvesting would only occur in order to achieve a management objective and/or a desired condition (including, but not limited to fuels reduction and/or wildlife habitat improvements).
- **Commercial Use of Special Forest Products and Firewood:** This includes firewood, Christmas trees, tree transplants, mushrooms, medicinal herbs, boughs, and cones. Commercial use would occur through a permitting process. Personal use (use not involving the sale of forest products) may require a permit.
- **Land Use ROWs, Special Use Permits, and Utility Corridors:** This includes energy corridors, linear transmission, communication sites, and other land use authorizations.
- **Livestock Grazing:** This includes permitted livestock grazing as authorized by an agency grazing permit on designated grazing allotments or areas outside grazing allotments where livestock grazing could be used as a vegetation management tool. Allotments contain lands that are both suitable and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Stocking rates would be based only on lands suitable for livestock grazing as determined at the project level.

- **Facilities:** This includes infrastructure and structures placed on public lands for resource protection, administrative use, and/or public enjoyment.
- **Motorized (summer):** This includes the use of any motorized wheeled vehicle (including four-wheel drives, dirt bikes, and ATVs/OHVs) during the year when the ground is not covered by snow.
- **Motorized (winter):** This includes the use of snowmobiles and other motorized winter vehicles during the snow-covered months.
- **Non-Motorized (summer and winter):** This includes hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and/or other means of non-motorized recreation. Non-motorized use does not include mountain biking because it is addressed as a separate activity below.
- **Mechanical Transport:** This includes any contrivance that moves people or material in or over land, water, or air that has moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user, and that is powered by a living or non-living power source. This includes, but is not limited to, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts.
- **Road Construction (permanent or temporary):** This includes the building of roads for a specified use or uses, either permanent or temporary.
- **Minerals - Leasable:** This includes oil and gas, coal, and other leasable minerals, including solid leasable minerals such as sodium, potassium, and others. All SJNF and TRFO lands made available for lease are subject to standard lease terms, which require operators of leases, as well as leasable mineral permits and licenses, to minimize adverse impacts to air, water, land, visual, cultural, and biological resources. Special lease stipulations are applied to a lease if additional restrictions on the rights of lessees are required to protect environmental resources. Special lease stipulations include NSO, CSU, and TL. Stipulations applied to new leases are described in Appendix H, Resource Management Stipulations for New Leases, of this LRMP.
- **Minerals - Locatable:** This includes minerals that are subject to claim under the Mining Law of 1872 that are open to entry for exploration and development (unless withdrawn by law). Unless lands have been withdrawn by law, development of locatable minerals is generally allowable on SJNF and TRFO lands; however, additional measures may be applied to plans and notices to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation in areas with concerns for specific resources or management designations.
- **Mineral - Salable:** This includes sand, gravel, and decorative rock for commercial or personal use, which may be disposed of through sales contract to individuals or for-profit enterprises, or through free use permits to government and non-profit entities.

Geographic Areas San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office Figure 3.1



3.1 Tres Rios Field Office Geographic Area

The TRFO geographic area consists of 503,589 acres of BLM public land in southwest Colorado and is scattered across eight counties: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Montrose, San Juan, and San Miguel. Public lands in this geographic area are incredibly diverse and rich in natural and cultural resources, from the spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery of the Alpine Loop to the wealth of Ancestral Puebloan sites in the Four Corners area. There is also more than 300,000 acres of federal mineral estate underlying private lands (known as split estate) and mineral management on 800,000 acres of trust responsibility for tribal lands. Some of the BLM lands in the southern portion are adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park and to the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation and Southern Ute Reservation. Some of the BLM lands in the northwest portion border the Uncompahgre (Colorado), Moab (Utah), and Monticello (Utah) Field Offices of the BLM.

Recreation opportunities within the TRFO geographic area include whitewater rafting, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, motorcycle riding, photography, wildlife viewing, picnicking, skiing, snowmobiling, OHV use, or driving along one of the many scenic routes. There are seven WSAs located in the TRFO geographic area. The Dolores River Canyon WSA is located approximately 17 miles west of Naturita, Colorado, and 28 miles north of Dove Creek. Elevations range from 5,000 to 5,300 feet. The dominant topographic feature of the WSA is the 30-mile-long, deeply cut, meandering canyon of the Dolores River. The canyon rim and adjacent mesas support pinyon-juniper woodlands with mixed desert shrubs on the slopes. The canyon bottoms support thick desert riparian vegetation, and scattered enclaves of cottonwood, ponderosa pine, aspen, and spruce-fir occur within the WSA. Desert bighorn sheep and river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) have been re-introduced to the WSA.

The McKenna Peak WSA (19,398 acres) is located in San Miguel and Dolores Counties approximately 45 miles northeast of Dove Creek. Elevations range from 6,300 to 8,600 feet. The major topographic feature of the WSA is McKenna Peak, which rises 1,000 vertical feet from Disappointment Valley. The WSA contains a wide variety of topographic features, including Mancos Shale badlands, Mesa Verde sandstone cliffs, canyons, mesas, and rolling hills. This wide variety of topography provides for a diverse vegetation complex within the WSA; barren areas, salt desert shrubs, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and Douglas-fir, oak brush and mountain mahogany can all be found within the WSA. The western third of the WSA is located within the Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA).

The Menefee Mountain WSA (7,089 acres) is located approximately 2 miles south of Mancos and 3 miles east of Mesa Verde National Park. Elevations range from 6,500 to 8,600 feet on Menefee Peak, with steep canyons radiating out from the 6-mile-long ridge of Menefee Mountain. Pinyon-juniper woodland is the dominant vegetation type at the lower elevations, with oak brush and pockets of ponderosa pine and spruce-fir at the higher elevations.

The Weber Mountain WSA (6,303 acres) is located just east of Mesa Verde National Park and is separated from the Menefee Mountain WSA by Weber Canyon. Elevations range from 6,600 to 8,200 feet with short, steep canyons radiating out from the 5-mile-long ridge of Weber Mountain. The WSA is characterized by pinyon-juniper woodland at the lower elevations, with oak brush and pockets of ponderosa pine and spruce-fir at the higher elevations.

The West Needles Contiguous (1,240 acres), Whitehead Gulch (1,669 acres), and Weminuche Contiguous (1,533 acres) WSAs are remnants of study areas, which were exchanged with the USFS in a boundary adjustment completed in 1983. The scenic landscapes provide hikers and horseback riders opportunity to explore scenic landscapes in solitude.

Located just north of Disappointment Creek, the 22,000-acre Spring Creek Basin HMA is open to a variety of multiple uses. The area is maintained to provide for a range of 35 to 65 adult horses, and excess horses are generally gathered when numbers exceed 65. According to local lore, the horses are descendants of those brought to the Disappointment Creek area in the late 1800s by a horse rancher from Montana. DNA and blood testing have indicated that Thoroughbred and Morgan are the primary breed influences in this herd. Travel in the area is restricted to designated roads. This is a remote area and none of the roads in the herd area are graveled.

Rangelands comprise about 85% of the public land in the TRFO geographic area. Currently, the TRFO manages 100 active allotments serving 81 grazing permits and providing around 24,000 animal unit months (AUMs) of forage for domestic cattle and sheep.

The historic mining town of Silverton is surrounded by BLM public lands. Silverton is situated high in the San Juan Mountains at an elevation of 9,305 feet. It is one of the main portals to the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway (others being Ouray and Lake City).

Popular drives in the geographic area include the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway and the San Juan Skyway, which swivel through the San Juan Mountains. The 65-mile Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway winds through wild, roughed, land scattered with old mining ruins, ghost towns, scenic alpine meadows, mountain streams, and forested mountains.

The area includes high densities of significant Puebloan archeological sites, as well as more modern mining, railroad, logging, and grazing historical sites. The Dolores River flows for more than 200 miles through southwest Colorado, starting high in the San Juan Mountains and descending to the Colorado River at the Colorado-Utah border. The Dolores flows through five major western life zones, from the alpine life zone, at its headwaters to the Upper Sonoran life zone along much of its lower reaches (6,400 to 5,000 feet in elevation). The Dolores River Canyon is one of the primary scenic attractions in the geographic area.

The northwest corner of the TRFO geographic area is mostly BLM public lands, including Dry Creek Basin and Big Gypsum Valley in the North Canyonlands Section. Continued cattle grazing and oil and gas development is expected in the Paradox Basin. Geology in portions of the area consists of sedimentary shale and sandstone formations, and is largely responsible for the area's water quality. Surface water quality is considered poor. It is high in salinity and sediment from surface runoff over highly erosive soils with high salinity content.

The Grandview Area, which is near Durango, is being annexed to the City of Durango (with substantial real estate and commercial development expected for this area during the life of this LRMP). Durango is interested in acquiring BLM lands in this area in order to provide better access to the new hospital and adjacent developments. Acquisition of some of the adjacent BLM lands under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act is under consideration. BLM-administered lands in the Grandview Area are currently managed under a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (BLM and City of Durango 2000), offering a co-emphasis on recreation (non-motorized trails), wildlife winter habitat, and sand and gravel production. A review and possible modification of the Grandview Coordinated Resource Management Plan is expected in the near future (which would address new management challenges anticipated from ongoing development adjacent to the BLM lands). BLM-administered lands in the Grandview Area currently provide an extensive trail network that is immediately adjacent to Durango (popular for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking). Substantial partnership-based wildlife habitat improvement projects have been carried out on the property. Recreation and mineral development are to be designed in a manner that maintains winter wildlife habitat effectiveness (including closure to public and recreation access during some winters). The land also contains a very significant prehistoric cultural landscape and is the last representative of Pueblo I occupation on public lands in the Durango area.

Desired Conditions

- 3.1.1 Public lands continue to function as "working lands." Collaborative forest health and rangeland management practices reduce wildfire hazards, contribute to the viability of private ranch lands, and sustain ecosystem services (including watershed health and wildlife habitat). Mining and mineral extraction would continue to occur, subject to market demand, and associated plans, permits, and licenses would be processed in a timely and efficient manner. The local economy benefits from, and contributes to, sustainable resource management, as well as to the preservation of open space.

- 3.1.2 The Dolores River system remains a primary water source in order to meet domestic and agricultural needs while, at the same time, contributing a wide array of recreational, ecological, and aesthetic services. Collaborative efforts support watershed health, instream water quality, scenic assets, healthy native and sport fish populations, rafting and flat water boating opportunities, and flow and spill management below McPhee Dam in support of ecological, recreational, reservoir management, and water rights imperatives.
- 3.1.3 A variety of looped single- and two-track opportunities for motorized and mechanized recreation exist at a range of elevations, offering different levels of difficulty. Motorized and mechanized opportunities are balanced with opportunities for foot and horseback access to areas of relative quiet and solitude at a variety of elevations. Much of the primary access to these areas is shared, based on mutual courtesy and on a strong stewardship ethic that is primarily self enforced and maintained by individuals and user groups.
- 3.1.4 Cultural and historic resources are protected, interpreted, and promoted through an integrated network involving the Anasazi Heritage Center, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and community visitor centers (including the Cortez Cultural Center, the Galloping Goose Museum, and the Mancos Visitor Center). Residents and visitors are educated and oriented in a manner that enhances and encourages their participation in the enjoyment and stewardship of cultural resources (which are significant contributors to the local economy).
- 3.1.5 Scenic vistas, especially along byways, are protected and enhanced through collaborative efforts with partners (e.g., Colorado Byways Commission, CPW, the Montezuma Land Conservancy, Colorado Department of Transportation [CDOT], and local governments).
- 3.1.6 Abundance and viability of Gunnison sage-grouse, and its habitat, are achieved through a range-wide perspective on species management that provides a healthy sagebrush steppe ecosystem so that the sage-grouse, and other sagebrush obligate species in the system, benefit. An atmosphere exists of cooperation, participation, and commitment among wildlife managers, landowners, private and public land managers, other stakeholders, and the interested public in the development and implementation of conservation actions that recognize the importance of sustainable local economies as being essential to successful conservation. Gunnison sage-grouse protection and restoration is enhanced through these cooperative efforts while, at the same time, oil and gas development, mining, recreation, and grazing continue.
- 3.1.7 Salinity and sediment contributions of the Dolores River tributaries (including Disappointment, Big Gypsum, Little Gypsum, and Dry Creeks) are reduced through an integrated activity approach that achieves reduced erosion and improves land health.
- 3.1.8 The unique soils of the gypsum lands in the Dolores area (including portions of Big Gypsum Valley, Little Gypsum Valley, and the Spring Creek area) are intact and have the soil productivity necessary in order to protect the rare biota associated with them.
- 3.1.9 The hanging gardens that provide the habitat for kachina fleabane (*Erigeron kachinensis*), Eastwood's monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*), and common maidenhair (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) have the water sources and hydrologic systems necessary in order to support and sustain these rare plant species.
- 3.1.10 Ponderosa pine forests on the mesa tops display structural diversity (including more old growth stands, stands with a clumped structure, stands with large old trees, snags, and large dead and downed wood on the forest floor).
- 3.1.11 Large patches of sagebrush shrublands provide suitable habitat for the Gunnison sage-grouse and display a variety of structural conditions (including sagebrush patches with low and high cover and sagebrush patches with short and tall stems). They also display native herbs that are abundant and well distributed.

- 3.1.12 Narrowleaf cottonwood riparian areas and wetland ecosystem communities throughout the low and middle elevations of the geographic area display moderate to high canopy cover (greater than 20%) of narrowleaf cottonwood trees, including young-, middle-, and old-age classes.
- 3.1.13 Willow riparian areas and wetland ecosystem communities throughout the low and mid elevations of the Dolores geographic area display moderate to high canopy cover (greater than 20%) of willows, including young-, middle-, and old-age classes.
- 3.1.14 Aspen management maintains age and class diversity and promotes healthy stand conditions while, at the same time, continuing to supply a sustainable supply of aspen products to the local and regional industries.
- 3.1.15 Timber and fire management is used in order to restore stands to an uneven-age condition where natural fire regimes and natural processes can occur, and where a multi-aged and multi-cohort forest structure resilient to disturbance is established. Timber management in the ponderosa pine incorporates restoration forestry into commercial timber sales at an appropriate scale that provide support, stabilization, and diversification of the local industry.

See relevant sections in Chapter 3 for specific management direction for the following areas within the TRFO geographic area:

- BLM WSAs (McKenna Peak, Dolores River, Weber, Menefee, Handies Peak, West Needles, Whitehead Gulch, and Weminuche Contiguous)
- Recommended WSR segments
- ACECs (Gypsum Valley, Anasazi Culture Area)
- BLM SRMAs (Dolores River Canyon, Durango, Silverton, and Cortez) (see Section 2.14, Recreation)
- Lands managed for wilderness characteristics
- Wild horse HMAs (Spring Creek)
- Scenic, historic, and backcountry byways (portions of the San Juan Skyway and the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway)
- BLM wildlife management areas (Perins Peak)
- National recreation and scenic trails (Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, Old Spanish Historic Trail)
- Other areas with specific management (Dolores River Canyon, Mesa Verde Escarpment, Silverton area)

3.2 Dolores Ranger District Geographic Area (San Juan National Forest)

The Dolores Ranger District geographic area lies predominantly in Montezuma, Dolores, and San Miguel Counties, and consists of approximately 597,126 acres of NFS lands. The social center of this geographic area is the town of Cortez (with a population of approximately 8,500 people). Cortez is the Montezuma County seat, as well as the commercial center for the smaller communities of Mancos, Dolores, Rico, and Dove Creek (which is the Dolores County seat), all with populations of 1,200 or less.

The main river systems of this geographic area are the Mancos River (which has headwaters in the La Plata Mountains) and the Dolores River (which has headwaters in the Lizard Head wilderness). Both rivers provide irrigation for pastures, hay meadows, and other crops on private lands in the area. McPhee Reservoir, on the Dolores River, is the second largest body of water in Colorado. It is an important recreation area, as well as a source of domestic and irrigation water. Use of water from these rivers has greatly affected both historical settlement patterns and current land uses.

Significant portions of the San Juan Skyway traverse the Dolores geographic area (including U.S. Highway 145, from Lizard Head Pass down through Rico to Dolores and Cortez, and from there U.S. Highway 160 to the Montezuma-La Plata County line, which is the boundary with the Columbine geographic area). Other major segments of the skyway are to the east, in the Columbine geographic

area, and on the Uncompahgre National Forest to the north (going through Ouray, Ridgway, and Telluride). Since its designation as a scenic byway, the San Juan Skyway has been one of the most popular recreation attractions in southwest Colorado. It is one of only 26 All-American Roads in the United States. The skyway's diverse natural and cultural resources, combined with its unique and spectacular scenery, give it a claim as one of the crown jewels of scenic byways in the entire nation. Portions of the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway are also located within the Dolores geographic area.

The area includes high densities of significant Puebloan archeological sites (including the Anasazi Archeological District around McPhee Reservoir), as well as more modern mining, railroad, logging, and grazing historical sites.

The San Juan Mountains, which are part of the southern Rocky Mountains, fall into the South-Central Highlands Section. The San Juan Mountains are unusual within the north-south orientation of the Rocky Mountains, in that they are a large mountain range with an east-west orientation. This part of the geographic area includes the Lizard Head wilderness and several CRAs (including Storm Peak, Ryman, Black Hawk Mountain, and portions of San Miguel and Hermosa). This area has much less human development than the rest of the Dolores geographic area, with most of the development occurring on private land in the Dolores River valley (including the town of Rico). The area also contains some roads associated with historic, and current, timber harvesting and historic mining (especially near Rico). Big game hunting is popular in the fall. Aspen trees are an important component of the vegetation here, both for their scenic quality and to support the wood product plants in the area.

"The Pine Zone" is located on the west side of the geographic area and was heavily logged in the early 1900s. This area is still being logged; however, the emphasis is now on restoring more natural conditions. Cattle grazing occurs over most of the area. The area is also popular for big game hunting.

Desired Conditions

- 3.2.1 Public lands continue to function as "working lands." Collaborative forest health and rangeland management practices reduce wildfire hazards, contribute to the viability of private ranch lands, and sustain ecosystem services (including watershed health and wildlife habitat). The local economy benefits from, and contributes to, sustainable resource management, as well as the preservation of open space.
- 3.2.2 The Dolores River system remains a primary water source in order to meet domestic and agricultural needs while, at the same time, contributing a wide array of recreational, ecological, and aesthetic services. Collaborative efforts support watershed health, instream water quality, scenic assets, healthy native and sport fish populations, rafting and flat water boating opportunities, and flow and spill management below McPhee Dam in support of ecological, recreational, reservoir management, and water rights imperatives.
- 3.2.3 A variety of looped single- and two-track opportunities for motorized and mechanized recreation exist at a range of elevations, offering different levels of difficulty. Motorized and mechanized opportunities are balanced with opportunities for foot and horseback access to areas of relative quiet and solitude at a variety of elevations. Much of the primary access to these areas is shared, based on mutual courtesy and on a strong stewardship ethic that is primarily self-enforced and maintained by individuals and user groups.
- 3.2.4 Cultural and historic resources are protected, interpreted, and promoted through an integrated, interagency network involving the BLM's Anasazi Heritage Center and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and community visitor centers (including the Cortez Cultural Center, the Galloping Goose Museum, and the Mancos Visitor Center). Residents and visitors are educated and oriented in a manner that enhances and encourages their participation in the enjoyment and stewardship of cultural resources (which are significant contributors to the local economy).

- 3.2.5 Scenic vistas are protected and enhanced through collaborative efforts with partners (including the Colorado Byways Commission, CPW, the Montezuma Land Conservancy, the Office of Community Services, CDOT, Montezuma and Dolores Counties, and the Town of Rico).
- 3.2.6 The McPhee Reservoir area is one of the Four Corners' "recreation gems." A viable marina facility is re-established that offers, at a minimum, basic services for those enjoying water sports and fishing. A strong connection exists between the reservoir and the town of Dolores.
- 3.2.7 Ponderosa pine forests on the mesa tops of the Dolores geographic area display structural diversity (including more old growth stands, stands with a clumped structure, stands with large old trees, snags, and large dead and downed wood on the forest floor).
- 3.2.8 Narrowleaf cottonwood riparian areas and wetland ecosystem communities throughout the low and middle elevations of the Dolores geographic area display moderate to high canopy cover (greater than 20%) of narrowleaf cottonwood trees, including young-, middle-, and old-age classes.
- 3.2.9 Willow riparian areas and wetland ecosystem communities throughout the low- and mid-elevations of the Dolores geographic area display moderate to high canopy cover (greater than 20%) of willows, including young-, middle-, and old-age classes.
- 3.2.10 Aspen management maintains age and class diversity and promotes healthy stand conditions while, at the same time, continuing to supply a sustainable supply of aspen products to the local and regional industries.
- 3.2.11 Timber and fire management is used in order to restore stands to an uneven-age condition where natural fire regimes and natural processes can occur, and where a multi-aged and multi-cohort forest structure resilient to disturbance is established. Timber management in the ponderosa pine incorporates restoration forestry into commercial timber sales at an appropriate scale that provide support, stabilization, and diversification of the local industry.

See relevant sections in Chapter 3 for specific management direction for the following areas within the Dolores geographic area:

- Wilderness (Lizard Head wilderness area)
- USFS recommended wilderness areas (portions of the Lizard Head and Hermosa CRAs)
- RNAs (Narraguinnep and Grizzly Peak)
- Scenic, historic, and backcountry byways (portions of the San Juan Skyway and the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway)
- National recreation and scenic trails (Calico and Highline trails)
- Special Areas (Rico and McPhee)

Management Area Composition: Table 3.2.1 shows the distribution of MAs within the Dolores geographic area.

Table 3.2.1: Management Area Distribution in the Dolores Geographic Area

Management Area	Proposed Plan (Preferred Alternative) (acres)	Percentage of Geographic Area (USFS lands)
MA 1: natural processes dominate	34,427	5.8%
MA 2: special areas and designations	34,645	5.8%
MA 3: natural landscapes, with limited management	209,620	35.1%
MA 4: high-use recreation emphasis	28,053	4.7%
MA 5: active management (commodity production in order to meet multiple-use goals)	289,779	48.5%
MA 7: public and private lands intermix	0	0.0%
MA 8: highly developed areas	602	0.1%
Total	597,126	100%

3.3 Columbine Ranger District Geographic Area (San Juan National Forest)

The Columbine geographic area forms the central part of the planning area. It is situated primarily in La Plata and San Juan Counties, with some lands in Hinsdale and Archuleta Counties, and consists of approximately 691,150 acres of NFS lands. The Columbine geographic area shares a northern border with the Uncompahgre and Rio Grande National Forests, and with the BLM TRFO, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison Field Offices.

The social center of this geographic area is the city of Durango (with a population of approximately 16,000 people). It is the county seat for La Plata County (with a population of approximately 47,000 people). It is also the commercial center for the smaller communities of Bayfield (approximately 1,800 people), Ignacio (approximately 775 people), and Silverton (approximately 600 people; which is the San Juan County seat). Farmington, Aztec, and Bloomfield (New Mexico) have ties to the area as trade centers, support for the oil and gas industry, and recreation users (especially of La Plata Canyon).

Durango Mountain Resort (DMR) lies between Silverton and Durango, off of U.S. Highway 550. DMR has a base area on private land, with some additional base facilities and ski runs permitted on the SJNF. La Plata and San Juan Counties have approved a Planned Unit Development for the private lands adjacent to the DMR, with the potential for over 2,000 resort housing and lodging units supported by substantial commercial development. The likely increase in population adjacent to public lands will result in a need for close coordination on issues (including trail development, fuels reduction, and wildlife habitat).

Significant portions of San Juan Skyway traverse the Columbine geographic area (including as U.S. Highway 550 from Durango north to Silverton, and over Red Mountain Pass, which is the boundary with the Uncompahgre National Forest). A lower elevation portion of the skyway follows U.S. Highway 160 from Mancos Hill to Durango. The other towns in the Columbine geographic area are situated at lower elevations (and have milder climates). Durango is situated at the intersection of U.S. Highway 550 (which connects with Silverton to the north, and Aztec and Farmington, New Mexico, to the south) and U.S. Highway 160 (which connects with Cortez to the west and Pagosa Springs to the east). The city is a hub for the area. Durango is one of the more mature tourism towns in Colorado, with a historic downtown. It is supported by tourism related to the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, the Animas River, DMR, Mesa Verde National Park, and the Weminuche wilderness area. Durango is one of a handful of towns that can make a good claim to the title "mountain bike capital of the world." Durango is also home to Fort Lewis College. It is the governmental, commercial, and entertainment center for southwest Colorado. Residents of Durango have easy access to public lands within the planning area. Bayfield has been a bedroom community to Durango, but is developing a significant business infrastructure of its own, which is expected to grow in the coming years.

The main river systems in the Columbine geographic area are the Animas (with headwaters above Silverton) and the Los Pinos, or Pine (with headwaters in the Weminuche wilderness). Both rivers drain into the San Juan River in northern New Mexico, which then joins the Colorado River. Water diversion for agriculture and municipal use is important on both rivers. Both river systems also contain relatively pristine stretches that are valued for their scenery and recreational opportunities.

Vallecito Reservoir is in this geographic area; it is the most developed lakeshore resort and recreation area in southwest Colorado. Above Vallecito Reservoir, and nearby Lemon Reservoir, are access points to the Weminuche wilderness. The Los Pinos River flows south from Bayfield through the town of Ignacio, which is a tri-ethnic community that serves as the headquarters of the Southern Ute Tribe. The Southern Ute Tribe has combined decades of revenues from energy production with excellent management in order to become one of the wealthiest tribes in the country.

The higher country, part of the San Juan Mountains, is characterized by steep, rugged terrain with predominantly spruce-fir, aspen, and mixed conifer forests. Much of the area to the east of U.S. Highway 550 and the Animas River is in either the Weminuche wilderness or in the Piedra Area (designated in the 1993 Colorado Wilderness Act to be managed to preserve its wilderness character). CRAs include Baldy, Florida River, Runlett Park, and smaller areas adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness area and the Piedra Area.

The Missionary Ridge Fire in 2002 burned approximately 73,000 acres in the area north of Durango (east of U.S. Highway 550), over to the western edge of the Piedra Area (east of Vallecito Reservoir). Early rehabilitation efforts have gone well; however, restoration would continue to be a concern during the life of the LRMP. Continued cooperation with local communities (including Vallecito) that were greatly affected by the fire and its aftermath will continue to be a management goal.

Much of the high country west of U.S. Highway 550 is unroaded, including the Hermosa area (which is the largest roadless area outside designated wilderness in Colorado, consisting of approximately 148,139 acres). The Hermosa Trail, which parallels the main stem of Hermosa Creek, is considered one of the top mountain bike rides in the country. The portion of the Hermosa Creek west of the trail is managed as a MA 1, with much it recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The eastern portion, including the trail, is managed as MA 3. Although this portion includes several popular motorcycle routes, non-motorized recreation is emphasized for most of the Hermosa area. The San Miguel area is another large roadless area (a significant portion of which is to be managed as a MA 1, including Engineer Mountain).

This area is characterized by low- to mid-elevation mountains, mesas, hills, and valleys with mild to moderate winters and predominantly mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, pinyon-juniper, and mountain grassland vegetation. Coalbed methane reserves exist in large quantities in the northern San Juan Basin area. Most of this area was leased for oil and gas development prior to the development of this LRMP with additional development authorized by the Northern San Juan Basin Coalbed Methane EIS (BLM and USFS 2006) and ROD in 2007 (USFS and BLM 2007). Direction for the area, consistent with that ROD, is found in Section 3.25 of this LRMP.

The vast amount of undeveloped land that provides a setting for backcountry recreation is a primary reason people visit this area. Additionally, the area contains some unique access into high-elevation remote areas (including the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad's access to Weminuche wilderness trailheads, and historic mining roads into the high-elevation mountains around Silverton and in La Plata Canyon). Compared to the other geographic areas, the Columbine geographic area has the most trailheads providing access into the backcountry. Given local population, visitors, tourism amenities, access to the backcountry, and the proximity of other regional destinations, the Columbine geographic area experiences the greatest amount of recreation users and resulting recreation management challenges.

The economies of the communities in the Columbine geographic area have evolved towards an increasing emphasis on amenity migration (the movement of people for pleasure rather than for economic reasons), recreation tourism, and resort development, but still have ties to multiple-use management. The historic connections of La Plata County to ranching, hunting, and public land grazing are of continuing importance, as the area struggles to protect the scenic, wildlife, and cultural aspects that ranching and outfitting/guiding play in the overall appeal of the area. Although the historic ties to sawmilling have substantially diminished, the Missionary Ridge Fire was a reminder of the continued need for forest management and the economies that help support forest management on public and private lands. The fact that La Plata County is one of the top energy-producing counties in Colorado also presents multiple-use management challenges.

Desired Conditions

- 3.3.1 The full spectrum of outdoor recreational opportunities, ranging from wilderness settings to in-town access, is provided. This is the result of a collaborative process for the allocation and sharing of uses and stewardship responsibilities designed to protect the quality of the human experience and health of the natural environment.
- 3.3.2 Extensive heritage resources remain central to the area's economy, culture, and recreational experience. Heritage resources, as well as the natural settings that make these resources so unique, are protected and sustainable.

- 3.3.3 Destination and resort development, especially along the river corridors, is planned, developed, and managed in order to minimize its impact on the health of surrounding landscapes, natural resources, and communities. This is the result of sustained cooperation from the land management agencies, interested citizens, state and local agencies, and developers.
- 3.3.4 Oil and gas development is planned, conducted, and reclaimed to a standard commensurate with the ecological, aesthetic, and human values attached to the land where the extraction is occurring.
- 3.3.5 Opportunities for research, particularly applied research, are fully developed with local partners (including Fort Lewis College, the Mountain Studies Institute, and the Center for Snow and Avalanche Research, as well as other interested groups and institutions).
- 3.3.6 Winter sports conflicts are reduced through cooperative efforts between motorized and non-motorized advocates. Some areas may emphasize one use over another, but many potential problems are resolved through agreements on locations of parking areas, grooming, and route locations. High-quality opportunities are available for both snowmobiling and backcountry skiing.
- 3.3.7 The wetlands and fens associated with the upper Pine River and Flint Creek watersheds in the Columbine geographic area (where a high density of fens occur) are protected and have the water sources and hydrologic systems necessary in order to support and sustain these ecosystems.
- 3.3.8 The wetlands and fens associated with the Lime Creek watershed and the Mountain View Crest and Molas Lake areas in the Columbine geographic area (where high concentrations of wetlands and potential fens occur) have the water sources and hydrologic systems necessary in order to support and sustain these ecosystems.
- 3.3.9 The Missionary Ridge wildfire area in the Columbine geographic area displays less bare soil and erosion, and a higher abundance and distribution of native herbaceous plant species.
- 3.3.10 The landscapes associated with the intensive gas development in the Columbine geographic area display minimal fragmentation. The major vegetation types associated with those lands, particularly the ponderosa pine forests, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and mountain shrublands, display compositions and structures similar to those that occurred before the development.

See relevant sections in Chapter 3 for specific management direction for the following areas within the Columbine geographic area:

- Wilderness (Weminuche wilderness)
- USFS recommended wilderness areas (a portion of the Hermosa CRA and the Elk Park portion of the Weminuche Adjacent CRA)
- Recommended WSR segments (Hermosa Creek and tributaries, Los Pinos and tributaries, above Vallecito Reservoir)
- RNAs (Electra and Hermosa)
- Botanical areas (Chattanooga Iron Fen)
- Archeological areas (Falls Creek)
- Scenic, historic, and backcountry byways (portions of the San Juan Skyway)
- National recreation and scenic trails (portions of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail)
- Special Areas (HD Mountains)

Management Area Composition: Table 3.3.1 shows the distribution of MAs within the Columbine geographic area.

Table 3.3.1: Management Area Distribution in the Columbine Geographic Area

Management Area	Proposed Plan (Preferred Alternative) (acres)	Percentage of Geographic Area (USFS lands)
MA 1: natural processes dominate	312,018	45.5%
MA 2: special areas and designations	48,239	7.0%
MA 3: natural landscapes, with limited management	216,800	31.6%
MA 4: high-use recreation emphasis	33,196	4.8%
MA 5: active management (commodity production in order to meet multiple-use goals)	61,512	9.0%
MA 7: public and private lands intermix	8,650	1.3%
MA 8: highly developed areas	5,632	0.8%
Total	686,047	100%

3.4 Pagosa Ranger District Geographic Area (San Juan National Forest)

The Pagosa geographic area is the easternmost geographic area in the planning area. It is bounded by the Continental Divide (the boundary with the Rio Grande National Forest) on the north and the east. It is predominantly situated in Archuleta, Hinsdale, and Mineral Counties, with some lands in Rio Grande and Conejos Counties. The Pagosa Ranger District consists of approximately 585,770 acres of NFS lands.

The social center of the geographic area is the town of Pagosa Springs (with a population of approximately 1,620 people). Although Pagosa Springs is the only incorporated town in the geographic area, much of the population of Archuleta County (with a population of approximately 10,000 people) is in low-density residential and second-home enclaves, most notably in the Pagosa Lakes area. The geographic area includes significant acres of Hinsdale and Mineral Counties, but the towns, as well as almost all of the population of those counties, are situated north of the Continental Divide and the Weminuche wilderness area (with little social connection and limited road access to the residents and businesses in the Pagosa geographic area).

Pagosa Springs sits at the intersection of U.S. Highway 160 (before the road turns north to head over Wolf Creek Pass) and U.S. Highway 84 (which heads south into northern New Mexico). Pagosa Springs was historically a compact sawmill and ranching town, with a Hispanic and pioneer Anglo ranching and sawmilling culture supported by productive forest land and livestock grazing. The area has long-standing ties with people coming out of Texas and New Mexico in the summer (to where it is cool and green) and from around the county in the fall (many to hunt big game). Besides the pleasant climate, the area is known for outstanding scenery. Many winter visitors to Wolf Creek Ski Area, as well as backcountry skiers and snowmobilers, stay in Pagosa Springs (rather than in South Fork, which is on the other side of Wolf Creek Pass).

On a percentage basis, Archuleta County is the fastest growing county in southwest Colorado. Amenity migration and second-home development began in the 1970s (with the development in the Pagosa Lakes area west of Pagosa Springs) and now fills most of the triangle of developable land between U.S. Highway 160, the Piedra Road, and the forest boundary east of Martinez Creek. Similar development has pushed against the USFS boundary to the west of Pagosa Springs and north of U.S. Highway 160. Much of the NFS lands around Pagosa Springs are in MA 7 settings (public and private lands intermix), which reflects this development. In addition to fire risk reduction in these areas, development of trails and recreation opportunities and the protection of wildlife habitat (especially winter range) are important.

The main river systems in this geographic area are the Piedra River (which has headwaters in the Weminuche wilderness area) and the San Juan River (with the headwaters of the West Fork of the San Juan beginning north of Pagosa Springs in the Weminuche wilderness area, and the East Fork of the San

Juan beginning northeast of Pagosa Springs in the South San Juan wilderness area). These rivers, and their tributaries, are important for recreation and scenic quality, as well as for irrigation and domestic water supplies. They also support a diverse mix of aquatic habitats and riparian and wetland ecosystems that contribute to the ecological and economic values of the area.

Approximately 85% of the public lands in the Pagosa geographic area are in the South-Central Highlands Section (including portions of the Weminuche wilderness area, the South San Juan wilderness area, and the Piedra Area). The Treasure Mountain and Turkey Creek CRAs (which lie between the Weminuche and the South San Juan wilderness areas) contain important linkages and corridors for wildlife movement. Other IRAs include Graham Peak and areas adjacent to the Weminuche and South San Juan wilderness areas and the Piedra Area. These areas are managed, for the most part, in order to preserve their undeveloped character.

At middle and lower elevations in this geographic area, there is an extensive network of roads, primarily left by historical logging. These roads support many forms of dispersed recreational use and camping, and are heavily used during hunting season. Restoration-oriented logging is expected in the ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest found in this area. This area receives more precipitation than most of the Southwest and has good growing conditions for timber. Large trees, including aspen, are common.

Having moderate climates, the lower elevation mountains, mesas, and valleys are dominated by mountain grasslands, and mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, and pinyon-juniper woodlands, where human settlement has evolved. Much of the human development in the Pagosa geographic area is at the interface with forest lands, presenting wildfire hazard mitigation challenges that are being actively addressed through county policy, community wildfire protection planning, and mitigation.

A related challenge is the network of access roads connecting U.S. Highway 160 and U.S. Highway 84 to the SJNF. These roads provide access to residential subdivisions and other private in-holdings. They also provide recreation access to public lands for local visitors, as well as for visitors from out of the area. The pressure on these roads presents maintenance demands and costs that must be worked out collaboratively among local, state, and other federal agencies; property owners; and public land users. Growth in the Pagosa geographic area has reached a point where more domestic water and water storage are needed in order to meet increasing demand. This requires continued cooperation, in terms of exploring alternatives that involve storage and/or diversion facilities located on federal lands (where protecting the ecological integrity of affected stream channels is mandated).

The Pagosa geographic area's most striking heritage resource is the Chimney Rock National Monument. The user-supported interpretive tours, special events, and visitor center at this unique pre-Puebloan site are conducted and staffed by a very active group of volunteer citizens.

Desired Conditions

- 3.4.1 Management activities maintain or enhance the ecological sustainability and integrity of the area. The demands of residents and users are balanced with the protection of watersheds, wildlife habitat, vegetation, soil productivity, and undisturbed natural areas.
- 3.4.2 The Pagosa geographic area is a destination for hunters, hikers, and motor vehicle enthusiasts. It promotes partnerships and responsible stewardship in all recreational uses of the public lands.
- 3.4.3 The local economy is supported and diversified by agency activities and programs (including maintaining roads, facilities, and campgrounds; supporting stewardship and partnerships; and providing a wide spectrum of recreation and tourism opportunities).
- 3.4.4 The USFS recognizes the needs of the area's growing population of residents and visitors. SJNF facilities (including roads, bridges, campgrounds, and trailheads) are designed and maintained to the proper standards for safe and efficient access to public lands.

3.4.5 The SJNF actively cooperates with local governments, residents, and land users in order to maintain and enhance the safety and enjoyment of the public lands. This is accomplished through the protection of scenery, the mitigation of WUI fire danger, and land ownership adjustments.

3.4.6 White fir is less abundant in the warm-dry and cool-moist mixed conifer forests of the Pagosa geographic area. The rare bristlecone pine forests that only occur in the Pagosa geographic area are protected and sustainable.

Please see relevant sections in Chapter 3 for specific management direction for the following areas within the Pagosa geographic area:

- Wilderness (Weminuche and South San Juan)
- Other Congressional designations (Piedra Area)
- USFS recommended wilderness areas (portions of the Turkey Creek, Monk Rock, and Weminuche Adjacent CRAs)
- Recommended WSR segments (the Piedra River, from U.S. Highway 160 to the Forks; East Fork of the Piedra, north of the wilderness boundary; Middle Fork of the Piedra; and West and East Fork of the San Juan River)
- Chimney Rock National Monument
- RNAs (Williams Creek, Martinez Creek, Hidden Mesas, Navajo River, Piedra, Porpyry Gulch)
- Botanical areas (O'Neal Hill, site of the globally rare Pagosa Springs bladderpod [*Lesquerella pruinos*]).
- National recreation and scenic trails (portions of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail).

Management Area Composition: Table 3.4.1 shows the distribution of MAs within the Pagosa geographic area.

Table 3.4.1: Management Area Distribution in the Pagosa Geographic Area

Management Area	Proposed Plan (Preferred Alternative) (acres)	Percentage of Geographic Area (USFS lands)
MA 1: natural processes dominate	252,073	43.3%
MA 2: special areas and designations	9,104	1.6%
MA 3: natural landscapes, with limited management	169,699	29.2%
MA 4: high-use recreation emphasis	8,615	1.5%
MA 5: active management (commodity production in order to meet multiple-use goals)	100,439	17.3%
MA 7: public and private lands intermix	40,909	7.0%
MA 8: highly developed areas	821	0.1%
Total	581,660	100%

3.5 Management Areas (San Juan National Forest)

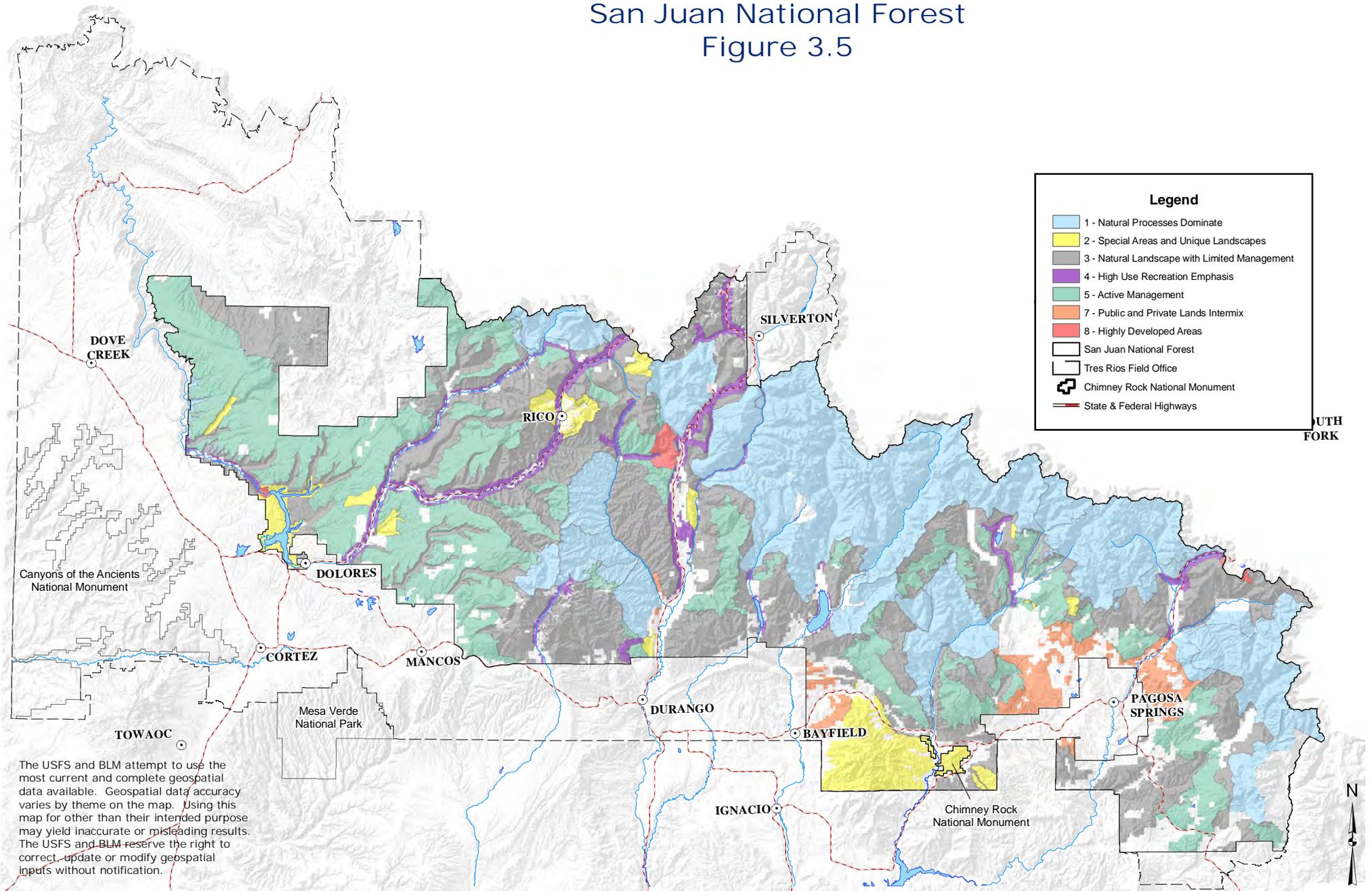
MA designations apply to all SJNF lands within the planning area, but not to TRFO lands. MAs describe the intensity of management that can be expected within each MA, ranging from areas where natural processes dominate and shape the landscape to areas that are intensely managed. In addition to the level of management, MAs also provide a general sense of how the landscape will appear and identify uses and activities that are allowed. To varying degrees, multiple uses occur within all the MAs. The allowable use tables for each MA portray the suitability determinations made under the grazing, timber, and travel programs in Chapter 2 as they apply to each MA, and also identify additional uses that are listed as allowable, restricted, or prohibited (if there are discrepancies between allowable use tables and grazing, timber, or travel suitability maps, the suitability map takes precedence). Table 3.5.1 identifies the distribution of MAs across the SJNF (see also Figure 3.5).

Table 3.5.1 Management Area Allocations on San Juan National Forest Lands

Management Area	Acres	Percent of SJNF
MA 1 Natural Processes Dominate	598,517	32.1%
MA 2 Special Areas and Designations	91,985	4.9%
MA 3 Natural Landscapes, with Limited Management	596,119	32.0%
MA 4 High-Use Recreation Emphasis	69,864	3.7%
MA 5 Active Management (commodity production in order to meet multiple-use goals)	451,730	24.2%
MA 7 Public and Private Lands Intermix	49,560	2.7%
MA 8 Highly Developed Areas	7,056	0.4%
Total	1,864,831	100%

Some exceptions may apply to activities, particularly those activities that are pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided by statute or treaty. Additionally, there are 566,100 acres of CRAs on the SJNF. CRAs are governed by the Colorado Roadless Rule and may have additional restrictions beyond the general suitability identified by MAs. When guidance in a forest plan is more restrictive than direction described in the Colorado Roadless Rule, actions must be consistent with the more restrictive direction.

Management Areas San Juan National Forest Figure 3.5



Legend

- 1 - Natural Processes Dominate
- 2 - Special Areas and Unique Landscapes
- 3 - Natural Landscape with Limited Management
- 4 - High Use Recreation Emphasis
- 5 - Active Management
- 7 - Public and Private Lands Intermix
- 8 - Highly Developed Areas
- San Juan National Forest
- Tres Rios Field Office
- Chimney Rock National Monument
- State & Federal Highways

The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

MDR
NAD 83, Polyconic Projection
May 30, 2013



San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office
Land and Resource Management Plan

Management Area 1 (MA 1): Natural Processes Dominate

These relatively pristine lands are places where natural ecological processes operate free from human influences. Succession, fire, insects, disease, floods, and other natural processes and disturbance events shape the composition, structure, and landscape patterns of the vegetation. These areas contribute significantly to ecosystem and species diversity and sustainability, serve as habitat for fauna and flora, and offer wildlife corridors, reference areas, primitive recreation opportunities, and places for people seeking natural scenery and solitude. Roads and human structures are absent and management activities are limited on MA 1 lands. Motorized travel, and in most cases, motorized equipment are prohibited. MA 1 areas include designated wilderness areas, the Piedra Area, WSAs, and other lands where a primary desired condition is to maintain the undeveloped natural character of the landscape. See Table 3.5.2 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 1.

Table 3.5.2: Management Area 1 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (allowable when meeting desired conditions of the area)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Prohibited
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Prohibited
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Prohibited
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Restricted (mountain bikes are allowable in MA 1 landscapes outside designated wilderness)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Prohibited
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (designated wilderness, WSAs, and the Piedra Area are withdrawn from mineral leasing; a NSO stipulation would be applied to CRAs outside designated wilderness)
Minerals - locatable	Prohibited (wilderness areas are withdrawn from locatable mineral entry, subject to valid and existing rights; other MA 1 areas are open to mineral entry, but impacts to natural resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

Management Area 2 (MA 2): Special Areas and Designations

These areas possess one or more special feature or characteristic that makes them, and their management, unique from other areas within the planning area. MA 2 areas include RNAs, archeological areas, habitat areas, botanical areas, and other unique areas that have a mix of special features and uses. In general, MA 2 areas are managed in order to protect or enhance their unique characteristics; therefore, management intensity and suitability varies by each area. See subsequent sections in Chapter 3 of this LRMP for specific management direction for these MA 2 areas.

Management Area 3 (MA 3): Natural Landscapes with Limited Management

MA 3 lands are relatively unaltered places where natural ecological processes operate primarily free from human influences. Succession, fire, insects, disease, floods, and other natural processes and disturbance events predominantly shape the composition, structure, and landscape patterns of the vegetation. These areas contribute to ecosystem and species diversity and sustainability, serve as habitat for fauna and flora, and offer wildlife corridors, reference areas, primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities, and places for people seeking natural scenery and solitude.

On the SJNF, approximately 47% of the MA 3 lands are within CRAs. Management activities are allowed in MA 3 areas but are more limited in the CRAs. For MA 3 lands that are not CRAs, roads, infrastructure, and management activities are more common. Management activities include habitat and ecosystem restoration, livestock grazing, wildland fire and prescribed burning, hazardous fuels reduction, salvage logging following fire, insect epidemics and/or wind events, and invasive species treatments. Motorized equipment may be used, and temporary road construction is allowed; however, most roads would be closed upon project completion. Most MA 3 areas emphasize non-motorized recreation opportunities, but motorized travel occurs in some areas on existing roads and motorized trails. Most MA 3 lands are available for fluid mineral leasing with specific resource stipulations; however, surface occupancy and road construction is prohibited (i.e., NSO stipulation) in CRAs. See Table 3.5.3 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 3.

Table 3.5.3: Management Area 3 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (development may be conditioned or prohibited in CRAs and lands managed for wilderness characteristics)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (development may be prohibited in CRAs and lands managed for wilderness characteristics)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (motorized travel may occur in some MA 3 locations on designated routes)
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (oversnow motorized travel may occur in some MA 3 locations)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (temporary road construction may occur in some MA 3 locations in order to achieve resource desired conditions; exceptions may apply for valid existing rights; additional road construction would also be allowed subject to valid existing rights and terms of development authorization)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (special lease stipulations [i.e., NSO, CSU, TL] may apply to specific resources within MA 3 areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (limited road access and other constraints in MA 3 landscapes may limit or preclude mineral collection.)

Management Area 4 (MA 4): High-Use Recreation Emphasis

These areas are places with relatively high levels of recreation use that is managed in order to provide a wide variety of opportunities and experiences to a broad spectrum of visitors. They are associated with, and often provide, access to popular destinations, transportation corridors, scenic byways, scenic vistas, lakes, and streams. Developed recreation facilities that provide user comfort and resource protection are present.

These areas tend to be altered by human activities, but also include some more undeveloped places (including backcountry travel corridors). Visitors can expect to see a wide range of human activities and development (including roads, trails, interpretive sites, campgrounds, trailheads, fences, and day-use facilities). Both motorized and non-motorized activity is common. Natural ecological processes and disturbance agents (including succession and fire) are often influenced by humans on most of these lands. Resource uses (including livestock grazing, timber management, and wildlife management) may occur in conjunction with surrounding recreation and scenic objectives. Mineral development, mining, and alternative energy infrastructure is generally not compatible within MA 4 areas, e.g., in developed recreation sites or along scenic corridors. See Table 3.5.4 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 4.

Table 3.5.4: Management Area 4 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (may be used in order to meet desired conditions on adjacent lands)
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted (restrictions may apply within developed recreation areas)
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Allowable
Livestock grazing	Restricted (restrictions may apply within developed recreation areas)
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (special lease stipulations [i.e., NSO, CSU, TL] may apply to specific resources within MA 4 areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (generally not compatible within developed recreation areas or scenic corridors)

Management Area 5 (MA 5): Active Management

These multiple-use areas are places where active management occurs in order to meet a variety of social, economic, and ecological objectives. They are easily accessible, occurring mostly on roaded landscapes and relatively gentle terrain. These are lands where timber harvesting, oil and gas activities, and intensive livestock grazing occur and influence the composition, structure, and landscape patterns of the vegetation. Natural ecological processes and disturbance agents (including succession and fire) are often influenced by humans on many of these lands. A mosaic of vegetation conditions is often present, some showing the effects (impacts) of past management activities, others appearing predominantly natural. These areas contribute to ecosystem and species diversity and serve as habitat for fauna and flora.

In MA 5 areas, visitors can expect to see a wide range of human activities, development, and management investments (including roads, trails, fences, corrals, stock ponds, timber harvesting equipment, oil and gas wells, and livestock). Maintenance of past and current investments is anticipated to be continued for future management opportunities. Motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities are easily accessed by the relatively dense network of roads found on these lands. Hiking trails provide access for visitors (who can expect contact with others). Developed recreation facilities that provide user comfort and resource protection are present. See Table 3.5.5 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 5.

Table 3.5.5: Management Area 5 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Allowable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Allowable
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Allowable (special lease stipulations [i.e., NSO, CSU, TL]) may apply to specific resources within MA 5 areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Allowable

Management Area 7 (MA 7): Public and Private Lands Intermix

These areas are places where the public lands within the planning area are in close proximity to private lands; therefore, coordination with communities and local governments is essential in order to balance the needs of both parties. MA 7 areas are often associated with towns and cities, as well as with the houses, structures, people, and values associated with them. Visitors can expect to see a wide range of human activities and development (including roads, trails, fences, signs). In some MA 7 areas, oil and gas development is evident.

The proximity of these areas to private lands makes them a priority for fuels and vegetation treatments in order to reduce wildfire hazards. The backyard or rural recreation setting provided by many of these lands is an amenity to the active lifestyles and quality of life for local residents. Hiking, biking, and dog-walking are common activities. These areas contribute to ecosystem and species diversity, and serve as habitat for fauna and flora. Winter range for deer and elk is a common component of MA 7 areas, as are seasonal closures in order to reduce animal disturbance. Natural ecological processes and disturbance agents (including succession and fire) are influenced by humans on most of these lands.

Land exchanges, acquisitions, and disposals can be undertaken in order to improve the intermingled land ownership patterns that are common in MA 7 areas. Cooperation with adjacent landowners and local governments is common in order to improve access and convey roads to county jurisdictions, where appropriate. Cooperation is also be important in order to improve the transportation network, enhance protect resources, and allow authorized legitimate access to public lands. Utility and communication distribution lines tend to be more common in these areas. See Table 3.5.6 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 7.

Table 3.5.6: Management Area 7 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Prohibited
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Allowable
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Allowable (special lease stipulations [i.e., NSO, CSU, TL] may apply to specific resources within MA 7 areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Allowable (depending on location and resources present, resource restrictions may apply as identified in the LRMP standards and guidelines)

Management Area 8 (MA 8): Highly Developed Areas

These lands are places that have been altered with long-term development (including downhill ski areas and large dams). In these areas, human activities have created lasting changes in the composition, structure, and function (ecological processes and disturbance agents) of the associated ecosystems. These areas, which often provide large socioeconomic benefits, include DMR and the McPhee Dam. Mineral development, mining, and alternative energy infrastructure is generally not compatible within MA 8 areas, e.g., within downhill ski areas and dams. See Table 3.5.7 for a list of allowable, restricted, and prohibited uses within MA 8.

Table 3.5.7: Management Area 8 Allowable Uses

Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Prohibited
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Allowable
Livestock grazing	Restricted
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (stipulated with NSO to protect facilities)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, MA 8 areas contain a provision for assessing the affected area for future mineral withdrawal and/or segregation)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (depending on location and resources present, restrictions may apply as identified in the LRMP standards and guidelines)

3.6 Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas

Wilderness is a unique and vital resource. In addition to offering primitive recreation opportunities, it is valuable for its scientific and educational uses, as a benchmark for ecological studies, and for the preservation of historical and natural features.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this chapter an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Federal agencies manage wilderness resources in a manner that ensures that their character and values are dominant and enduring. Wilderness management must be adapted over time in order to ensure their present and future availability and enjoyment as wilderness. Wilderness is managed in order to ensure that human influence does not impede the free play of natural forces or interfere with natural succession in the ecosystems, and to ensure that wilderness areas offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Wilderness is also managed as one resource rather than a series of separate resources (FSM 2320.6).

There are three wilderness areas on USFS-administered lands, as well as the Piedra Area (USFS), which is a Congressionally designated area managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics (see Figure 3.6). Wilderness areas are managed by USFS policy outlined in FSM 2320. Specifically, the wilderness areas and the Piedra Area are managed under the San Juan-Rio Grande National Forests Wilderness Management Direction (USFS 1998a) that is incorporated by reference as part of this LRMP.

There are eight WSAs on BLM-administered lands within the planning area (see Figure 3.6). These WSAs are areas that were found to have wilderness characteristics during the original wilderness inventory that was conducted from 1978 to 1980 as directed by Section 603 of the FLPMA. This inventory focused on roadless areas of public lands of 5,000 acres or more, areas of less than 5,000 acres that had wilderness characteristics in association with contiguous roadless lands managed by another agency, and areas of less than 5,000 acres that had wilderness characteristics and could practicably be managed to keep those characteristics in an unimpaired condition. Other sections within the FLPMA provide additional authority to designate WSAs; however, all WSAs within the TRFO's jurisdiction were designated through the authority found in Section 603.

Section 603 also provides direction to the BLM on the management of WSAs and states, "During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness." This language is referred to as the "non-impairment" mandate.

BLM WSAs were designated in the 1980s, and a final agency recommendation was forwarded to the President in 1991. Unless released by Congress from wilderness review, WSAs would continue to be managed in accordance with BLM Manual 6330 (July 13, 2012). If the WSAs are released, they would be managed in accordance with the direction provided in the desired conditions below. See Table 3.6.1 for a listing of the existing wilderness areas, the Piedra Area, and WSAs.

Table 3.6.1: Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas

Area Name and Type	Acres
Wilderness Areas	
Weminuche	328,270
South San Juan	71,593
Lizard Head	20,658
Total	420,521
Piedra Area	
60,400	
Wilderness Study Areas	
Weber Mountain	6,300
Dolores River Canyon	16,781
Handies Peak	1,041
Menefee Mountain	7,303
McKenna Peak	20,902
West Needles Contiguous	960
Whitehead Gulch	1,870
Weminuche Contiguous	1,419
Total	56,576

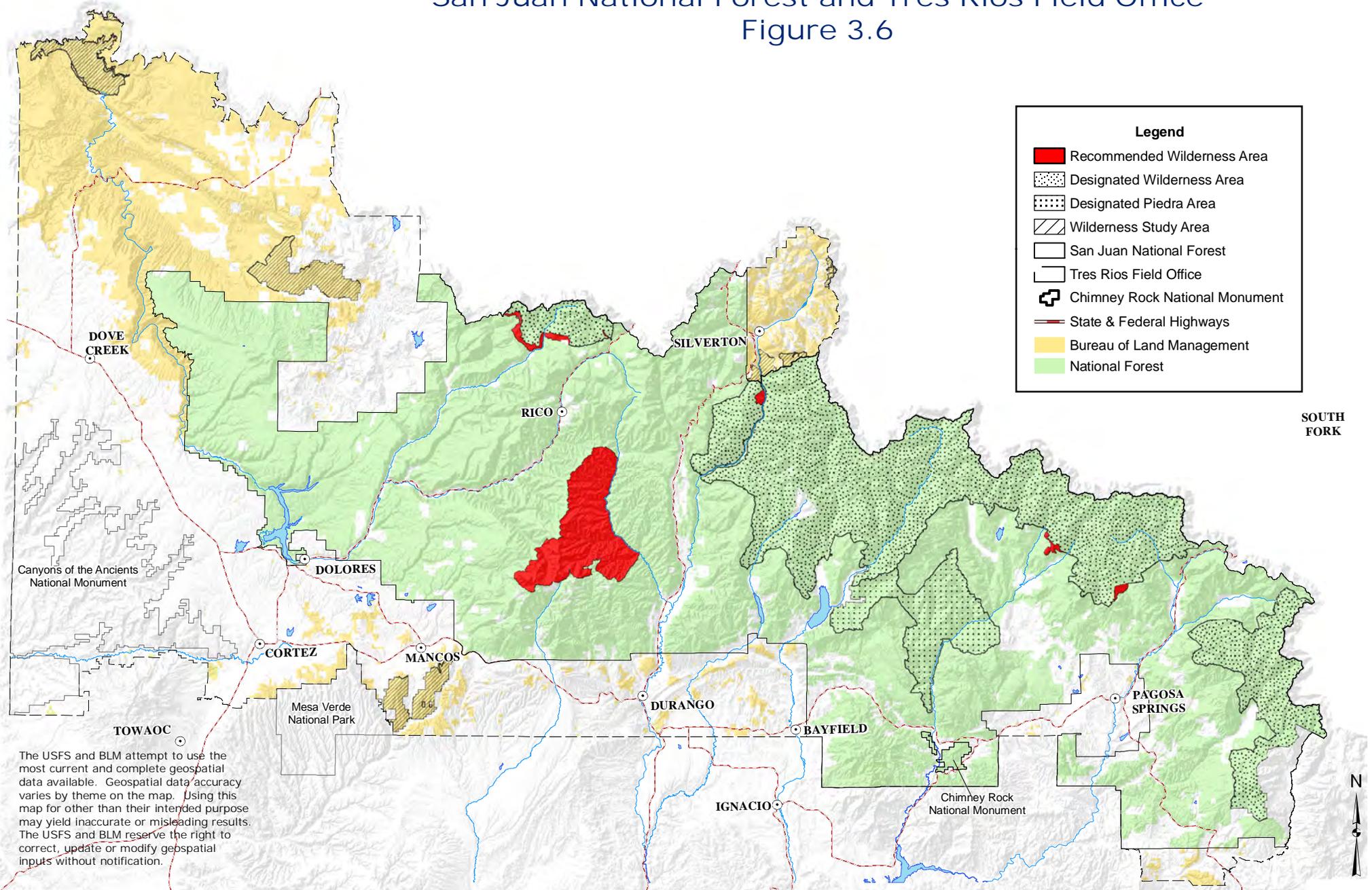
Desired Conditions

3.6.1 WSAs released by Congress from wilderness review would be managed for existing values and uses, such as primitive and unconfined recreation, opportunities for solitude, naturalness, roadlessness, livestock grazing, forest resources, and biodiversity. The visual quality of WSAs released from wilderness review would be managed under the VRM class of adjacent BLM public lands. Where more than one VRM class lies adjacent to a WSA, an interdisciplinary team would decide the VRM class of the released WSA.

Recommended Wilderness

San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office

Figure 3.6



Legend

- Recommended Wilderness Area
- Designated Wilderness Area
- Designated Piedra Area
- Wilderness Study Area
- San Juan National Forest
- Tres Rios Field Office
- Chimney Rock National Monument
- State & Federal Highways
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Forest

SOUTH FORK

The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

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 May 30, 2013



San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office
 Land and Resource Management Plan

3.7 Recommended Wilderness Areas (San Juan National Forest)

Using criteria from USFS directives, the SJNF used its inventory of roadless lands as part of the process for revising the LRMP to identify lands exhibiting “roadless character.” These areas were further examined to determine whether they possess wilderness characteristics using criteria from the Wilderness Act and FSH 1909.12. With regard to size, these areas must contain 5,000 or more acres, or they can contain less than 5,000 acres, but must be contiguous to existing wilderness areas or areas that are recommended for wilderness under other federal ownerships.

Twenty-one areas (totaling approximately 555,815 acres) are included in the SJNF inventory as having “roadless character.” These areas were analyzed for their potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (see Appendix C). The SJNF recommends the following areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (see Figure 3.6):

- portions of the Hermosa CRA (50,850 acres);
- portions of the Lizard Head CRA (2,632 acres);
- portions of the Weminuche Adjacent CRA (specifically, Elk Park and Monk Rock, totaling 740 acres); and
- portions of the Turkey Creek CRA (664 acres).

These areas will be managed to maintain their wilderness characteristics until Congress designates them as wilderness or releases them for other multiple-use management (in which case, they would be managed under MA 1).

3.8 Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics (Tres Rios Field Office)

In addition to the initial wilderness review required by Section 603 of the FLMPA that led to the creation of WSAs, the Secretary of the Interior is also required to “maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resource and other values,” which encompasses wilderness characteristics as a resource (FLPMA, Section 201).

In July 2011 the BLM Director reaffirmed this responsibility via BLM IM No. 2011-154 (BLM 2011h), which directed field units to review and update their inventory of lands for their wilderness characteristics and established a uniform protocol for doing so. The same IM emphasized that such an inventory “shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of the lands.” Rather, the findings of the wilderness characteristics inventory are to be considered among all other resource values and potential resource uses during the land use planning process.

Per the guidance found in IM 2011-154 (which became policy as BLM Manual 6310 in July 2012), an inventory was conducted to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics throughout the TRFO. Where these characteristics were found, discrete units were identified as “lands with wilderness characteristics.” Lands with wilderness characteristics can generally be defined as unroaded BLM public land areas greater than 5,000 acres in size that have maintained their primitive character and are primarily undeveloped. The wilderness characteristics inventory process further includes unroaded areas of any size adjacent to lands currently managed to protect wilderness characteristics, including those lands managed by other agencies. IM No. 2011-154 (BLM 2011h) also establishes a protocol for defining “roads” for the purposes of this inventory.

The FEIS alternatives analyze various strategies for managing these areas, and the BLM is not required to manage them in a particular manner as long as inventories are current and impacts to wilderness characteristics are analyzed and considered among the various other resources present in each unit. A detailed discussion of the wilderness characteristics inventory and evaluation process, and its results, is found in Appendix O. The EIS analysis, which takes into consideration the management of multiple resources, also guides the decision process for which lands with wilderness characteristics will be

managed for protection. Figure 3.8 identifies the lands that will be managed for wilderness characteristics, and Table 3.8.1 provides the acreage and a description of the location of the units that will be managed for wilderness characteristics.

Table 3.8.1: BLM Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics

Unit Number	General Location	Acres
CO-030-301b	Snaggletooth area of Dolores River	10,723
CO-030-290h	Coyote Wash	1,144
Total acres		11,867

Desired Conditions

3.8.1 Wilderness characteristics are present and preserved within the lands described in Table 3.8.1 and identified on Figure 3.8.

Standards

3.8.2 Lands described in Table 3.8.1 and identified on Figure 3.8 must be managed in accordance with the following management actions and allowable uses:

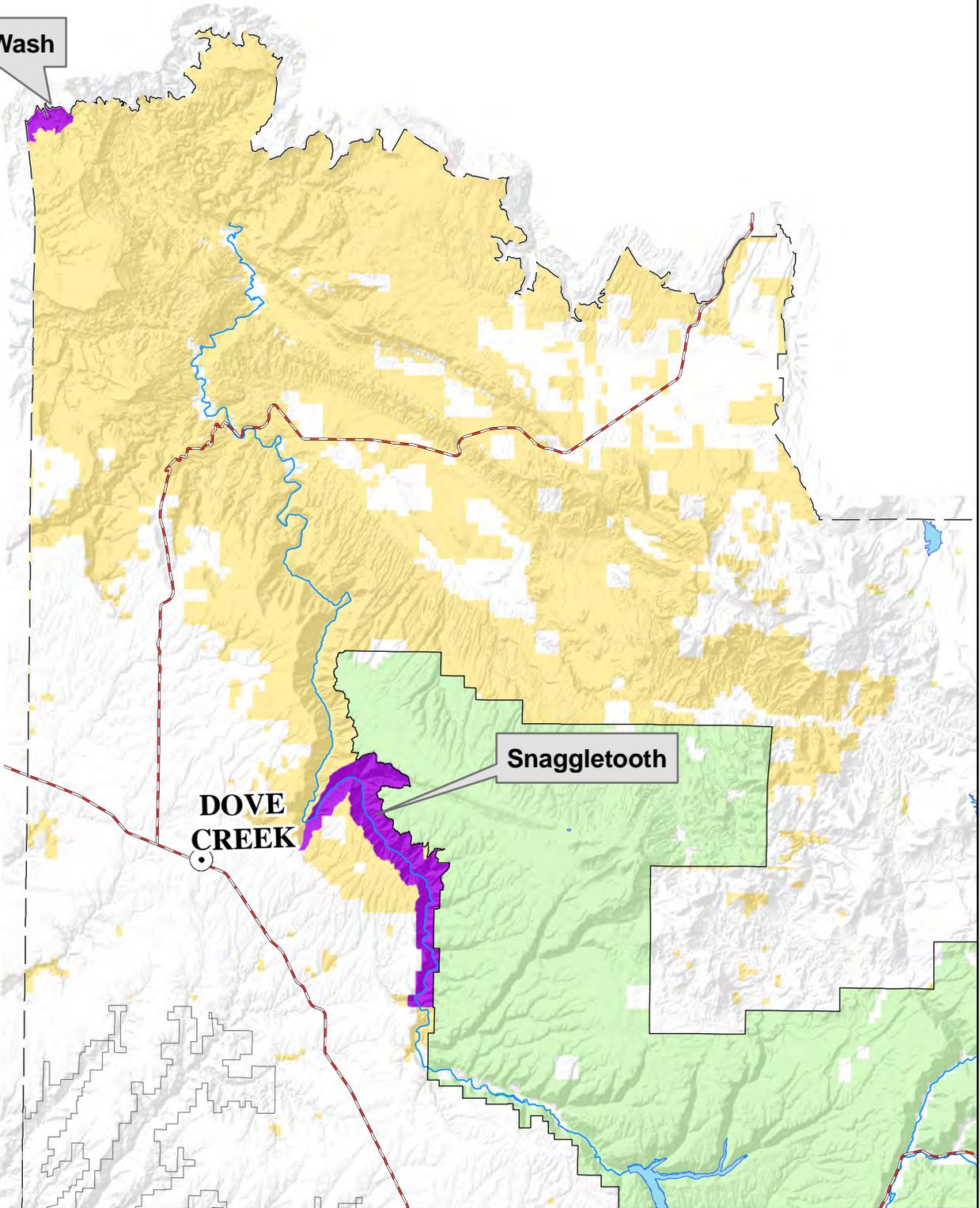
- 3.8.2a Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are not available for location of new rights-of-way under any conditions (they are identified as exclusion areas). Modification of existing authorizations that would add new disturbance outside the boundary of the existing right-of-way is prohibited; adjustments to existing rights-of ways or other authorizations may be allowed if impacts to wilderness characteristics are reduced or eliminated.
- 3.8.2b Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to new road construction.
- 3.8.2c Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to motorized and mechanized travel (summer and winter), with the exception of access related to valid existing rights.
- 3.8.2d Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to mineral materials sales.
- 3.8.2e Extractive commercial uses are prohibited.
- 3.8.2f Personal product removal permits are restricted to uses that that preserve or enhance wilderness characteristics.
- 3.8.2g Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are managed under VRM Class II.
- 3.8.2h Construction of new structures and facilities is restricted to activities that preserve or enhance wilderness characteristics or those necessary for the management of other uses allowed under this LRMP.
- 3.8.2i Lands managed for wilderness characteristics must be retained in federal ownership.

Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics

Tres Rios Field Office

Figure 3.8

Coyote Wash

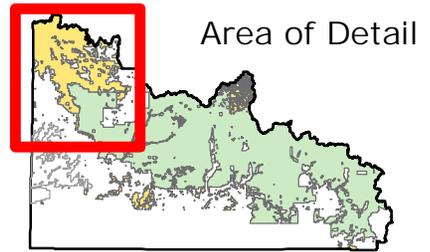


Snaggletooth

DOVE CREEK

Legend

- Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics
- San Juan National Forest
- Tres Rios Field Office
- Chimney Rock National Monument
- State & Federal Highways
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Forest



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July 2, 2013

3.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Introduction

Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) in 1968 in order to preserve the free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) of select rivers. The WSRA directs that each river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System be administered in a manner that protects and enhances its outstanding natural and cultural values. The WSRA allows existing uses of a river to continue and future uses to be considered (as long as the use does not conflict with the protection of river values).

WSRA Section 5(d)(1) directs federal agencies to consider the potential of all rivers and streams for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System during their planning processes. All streams and rivers within the planning area were assessed as to their WSR eligibility and suitability. The FEIS describes the process used for the planning area (also see Appendix D for additional details).

In order to be found suitable for WSR status, rivers must meet the following criteria:

- they must be free-flowing (not in a reservoir and having mostly natural banks);
- they must have at least one ORV (ORVs can be in relation to fish, wildlife, recreation, scenery, ecology, cultural, historic, and/or other resource);
- their free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs should be protected, even if there are other competing uses; and
- their WSR status would be the best method for protecting their ORVs.

During the planning process, the SJNF and TRFO determined the appropriate development level of rivers within the planning area. This was based on water resources development, shoreline development, and accessibility. These constitute a river's classification as "wild," "scenic," or "recreation." Table 3.9.1 lists the rivers that have been found to be suitable for WSR status (see also Figure 3.9).

These rivers may eventually be designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System by the Secretary of the Interior or as the result of an Act of Congress (Secretarial designation requires that the state governor make application to the Secretary of the Interior). The identification of rivers as suitable through this land management planning process does not trigger any water rights or other protections under the WSRA. In order to manage the rivers for their potential inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System, existing authorities will be used to protect the identified river's free-flowing character, water quality, ORVs, and recommended classification (details of the interim protective management are listed in FSM 1990.12_80 and BLM Manual 6400). Previous land management plans had similar direction and have provided protection for the ORVs of the Los Pinos River, the Piedra River, and the Dolores and West Dolores Rivers over the past several decades.

Table 3.9.1: Miles of River Segments Suitable for Wild and Scenic River Status by Class

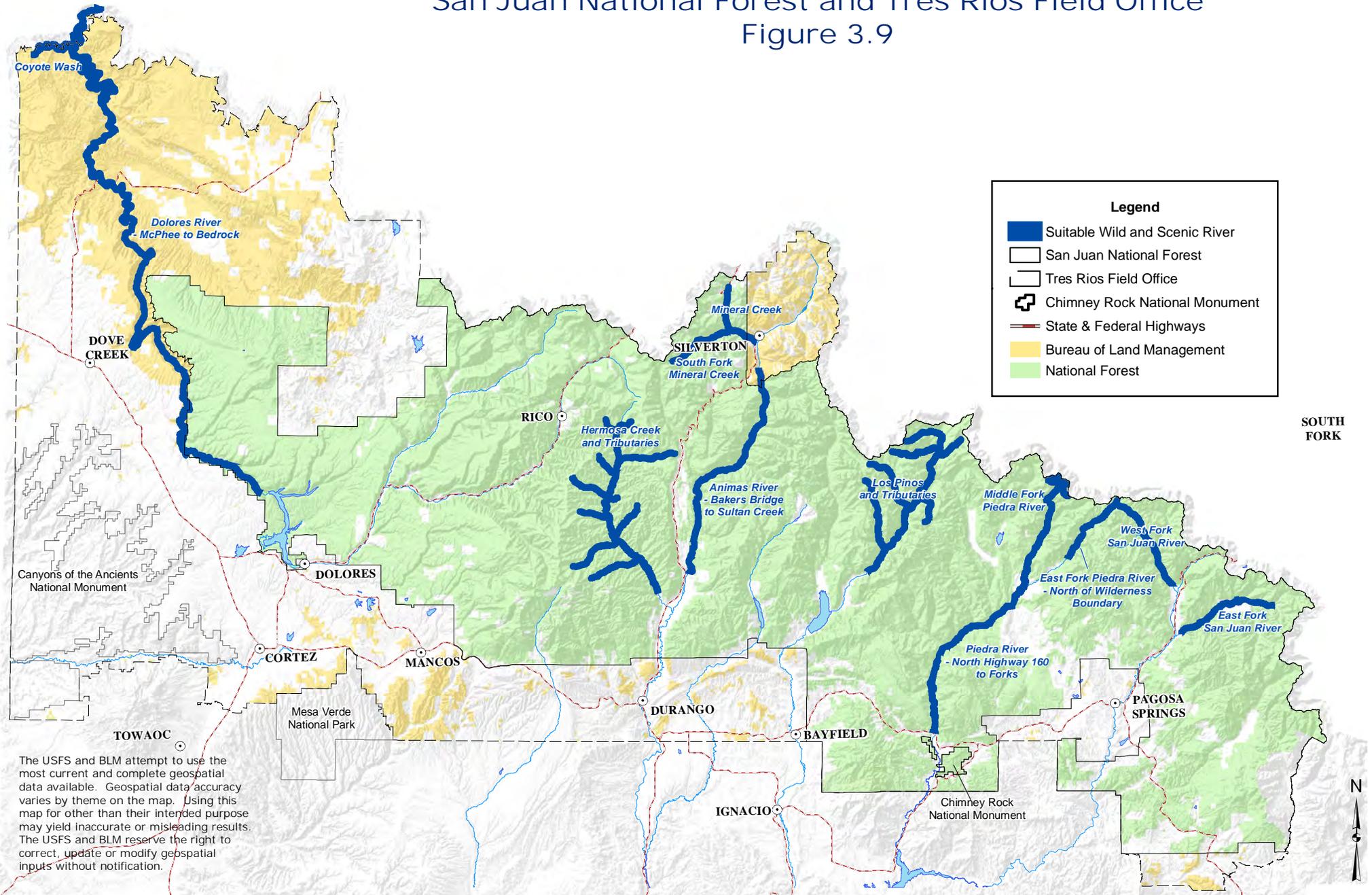
River Segment	Agency	Wild	Scenic	Recreation	Total
Dolores River - McPhee To Bedrock	BLM	48.33	23.10	36.89	108.32
Coyote Wash	BLM	7.60			7.60
Dolores Totals		55.93	23.10	36.89	115.92
Animas River - Bakers Bridge to Sultan Creek	FS			27.19	27.19
Mineral Creek	FS			8.65	8.65
South Fork Mineral Creek	FS			7.41	7.41
Animas River Totals				43.25	43.25

River Segment	Agency	Wild	Scenic	Recreation	Total
Big Bend Creek	FS	4.43			4.43
Big Lick Creek	FS	0.76			0.76
Clear Creek	FS		5.36		5.36
Corral Creek	FS	1.65			1.65
Deer Creek	FS	2.72			2.72
East Fork Hermosa Creek	FS			6.70	6.70
Elk Creek	FS	4.25			4.25
Hermosa Creek	FS		28.08		28.08
South Fork Hermosa Creek	FS	5.89			5.89
West Cross Creek	FS	2.44			2.44
Hermosa Creek Totals		22.14	33.44	6.70	62.28
Los Pinos, above Vallecito Reservoir	FS	21.77			21.77
Lake Creek	FS	8.05			8.05
Flint Creek	FS	7.03			7.03
Sierra Vandera Creek	FS	3.67			3.67
Snowslide Gulch	FS	3.51			3.51
Rincon la Osa	FS	5.69			5.69
Rincon la Vaca	FS	4.33			4.33
Los Pinos Totals		54.05	0.00	0.00	54.05
Piedra River N of Hwy 160	FS	14.09	0	7.98	22.06
East Fork Piedra River in Wilderness	FS	9.26	0	0	9.26
Middle Fork Piedra River	FS	11.64	0	7.66	19.30
Piedra River Totals		34.99	0	15.64	50.63
West Fork San Juan River	FS	8.50		2.70	10.7
East Fork San Juan River	FS			12.66	12.66
San Juan River Totals		8.48		15.44	23.88

Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office

Figure 3.9



The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

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 August 20, 2013



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 Land and Resource Management Plan

3.10 Scenic, Historic, and Backcountry Byways

Introduction

Currently, driving for pleasure is one of the most popular forms of recreation within the planning area, with scenic byways and backcountry byways serving as some of the most popular routes. As the population increases, and as “Baby Boomers” grow older and become less able to engage in more physically active forms of recreation, larger numbers of visitors are anticipated to take up driving for pleasure. Heritage tourism, which is among the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry, is often combined with a scenic drive.

Consistent with the primary goals of the National Scenic Byway Program, SJNF and TRFO managers will guide the appropriate physical development of these travel corridors and their associated facilities, direct the conservation of unique and valued attributes surrounding the planning area, and provide leadership for byway management that supports efforts to benefit these routes.

The planning area is home to the 232-mile-long San Juan Skyway, which was designated by the USFS as a National Scenic Byway in 1988 (also designated as a State Scenic and Historic Byway and as an All-American Road in 1997). The San Juan Skyway traverses some of the most spectacular, rugged, and pristine landscapes in America. The area is rich in culture—from prehistoric habitations to the colorful mining era that marked the San Juan Mountains in the 1800s (including the development of the narrow-gauge railways throughout the area).

The 65-mile-long Alpine Loop National Backcountry Byway passes through the southern San Juan Mountains (often along routes that follow ancient paths of Native Americans as they returned to their traditional summer hunting camps). This rugged route connects the towns of Lake City, Silverton, and Ouray. Spectacular high-elevation scenery and numerous historical markers explain the mining history of the area as the route travels through the towering San Juan Mountains.

The Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway highlights the long and intriguing inhabitation of the Four Corners region by Native Americans. It takes visitors to remote archeologically, culturally, and historically significant sites in Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The section of the byway within the planning area travels mainly within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (BLM), Hovenweep National Monument (National Park Service), Ute Mountain Ute tribal lands, and communities (including Cortez and Dolores). In total, 114 miles of this scenic byway are within Colorado.

The byway program provides some safety, information, and sanitary services; protects, conserves, and interprets valued resources; and promotes a quality image of the SJNF and TRFO. Planning and infrastructure for these popular driving routes is not keeping up with the increasing demand for recreation. Inventorying scenic conditions along the three byways, as well as developing or updating corridor management plans and interpretive strategies, will help identify management priorities and actions designed to enhance the visitor experience. Travel management planning will integrate effectively with the management of these byways.

SJNF and TRFO managers will participate in partnerships with local communities, businesses, governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and other interested groups and individuals to manage, develop, preserve and interpret these nationally significant routes, which have become destinations unto themselves. Potential projects should promote stewardship and ultimately provide benefits to local economies.

Desired Conditions

- 3.10.1 The byways are the main access routes, or gateways, to a wide array of recreation opportunities within the planning area; they have appropriate public information and services.
- 3.10.2 Important cultural, historic and agricultural heritage sites along these three byways (including early historic mining, ranching, and Native American sites) are interpreted.

- 3.10.3 Scenic byways and adjacent landscapes provide high-quality scenery. Viewsheds along scenic byways are protected, and scenic integrity is maintained in order to meet the public's desire for attractive natural landscapes. The byways contribute to recreation tourism and the regional economy. The byways are managed in order to protect the intrinsic qualities for which they were designated, consistent with current corridor management plans.
- 3.10.4 Each byway corridor management plan (the community-based strategy to balance the conservation of the byway corridors' intrinsic qualities with the use and enjoyment of those same resources) is up-to-date, having been developed with participation from a variety of stakeholders interested in preserving and enhancing the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological and recreational resource qualities of the byway.
- 3.10.5 Byway goals and objectives for the effectively integrated with the applicable agency recreation facility master plan.
- 3.10.6 Byway goals and objectives are considered when actions are taken that could impact the byway.
- 3.10.7 Significant historic structures along these three byways are preserved and stabilized.

Additional Guidance

- San Juan Skyway Corridor Management Plan (Friends of the San Juan Skyway Association 1995)
- Trail of the Ancients Corridor Management Plan (Mesa Verde County 2001)
- Alpine Triangle Recreation Management Plan (BLM 2010c)

3.11 National Recreation and Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails

Introduction

National recreation and scenic trails are federally recognized trails that connect people to local resources and improve their quality of life. More than 900 trails have been designated throughout the nation. There are two designated national recreation and scenic trails within the planning area: the Calico National Recreation Trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. A master plan for the Colorado Trail was signed in 1998 and all three trails are recognized through establishment reports and management plans for their scenic, historic, interpretive, and recreation values.

The Old Spanish National Historic Trail also crosses through the planning area. Authorized by Congress in December 2002, the Old Spanish National Historic Trail commemorates the first overland link from Santa Fe to California. While the Old Spanish Trail is currently mapped as crossing the planning area, very few localities associated with the trail have actually been identified and ground-truthed.

Trail stewardship is emphasized through partnerships, marketing and interpretation, monitoring efforts, and maintaining and enhancing desired conditions.

The key to sustaining a successful network of national recreation and scenic trails, and national historic trails, is to continue to engage partners (including the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Alliance and the Colorado Trail Foundation) and effective trail stewardship (including reconstruction, relocation, monitoring, volunteer recruitment and training, signage, and production of educational materials). Regular reviews of the partnership agreements between the SJNF or TRFO and partners will help ensure clear role definition for the management and operation of these trails. Coordination with adjoining USFS- and BLM-administered lands that also contain the Continental National Divide Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail is also an important element of successful trail management and interpretation.

Marketing emphasis includes ensuring that all trailheads and trails have essential safety, orientation, and regulatory signs that are consistent with the natural setting of the trail. Marketing efforts also include the dissemination of accurate information regarding these trails to the public in an effective manner through a variety of media and venues (including the SJNF and TRFO websites, guidebooks, brochures, and visitor centers).

Desired Conditions

- 3.11.1 Consistent with their designation, the significant scenic, historic, recreation and natural resources for each trail are identified, interpreted, and protected. The values for which these trails were established are retained.
- 3.11.2 The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail provide opportunities for remote backcountry recreation, challenge, and solitude, except where they come near area communities (where more people and development may be encountered).
- 3.11.3 The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail are non-motorized trails and have high scenic integrity.
- 3.11.4 Interpretive venues are used to inform and educate visitors about the national recreation and scenic trails, as well as about resource stewardship.
- 3.11.5 Trail segments near area communities and/or major access points are planned and designed in order to be barrier-free.
- 3.11.6 Partnerships are encouraged and expanded in order to provide identification, documentation, monitoring, protection, preservation, education, research, and interpretation.
- 3.11.7 Interpretive displays, visitor contacts, and brochures are available to help visitors and employees understand and appreciate the heritage and cultural resources associated with the SJNF and TRFO. A wide range of heritage activities, experiences, and products (both on-site and off-site) are available for visitor enjoyment and education. Off-site activities include museum displays, brochures, audio programs, classroom presentations, and field trips. Public access and interpretive efforts are compatible with the physical, cultural, and recreational settings and values of the resources.

Objectives

- 3.11.8 Over the life of the LRMP, partner with the Old Spanish Trail Association to ground truth the location of at least two segments of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.
- 3.11.9 Over the life of the LRMP, develop at least one interpretive product in partnership with the Old Spanish Trail Association that interprets the Old Spanish National Historic Trail within the planning area.
- 3.11.10 Over the life of the LRMP, inventory high potential historic sites and trail routes of the Old Spanish Trail, develop a national trail management corridor, and establish goals and objectives for national trails in accordance with BLM Manuals 6250 and 6280 (BLM 2012c, 2012d).

Guidelines

- 3.11.11 Other resource activities should be designed in order to meet scenic quality objectives for these special designation trails (generally, a foreground and middle-ground of very high to high scenic integrity or VRM Class II).

3.11.12 **Old Spanish National Historic Trail:** A literature search and/or Class III cultural resources survey should be conducted within 0.5 mile of either side of the centerline of the congressionally designated Old Spanish National Historic Trail in high potential segments, prior to authorization of ground-disturbing activities or activities that could substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail.

Additional Guidance

- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan (USFS 2009c)
- USFS Decision Notice, Colorado Trail Management Direction and Route Selection EA, Region 2 (USFS 1998b)
- USFS Master Plan for the Colorado Trail (USFS 1998c)
- FSM 2300, Chapter 2353, National Scenic and Historic Trails (USFS 2009d)
- BLM Manual 6250, National Scenic and Historic Trail Administration (BLM 2012c)
- BLM Manual 6280, Management of National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Trails and Trails under Study or Recommended as Suitable for Congressional Designation (BLM 2012d)
- Public Law 90-543, National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended 2002, (this amendment created the Old Spanish National Historic Trail)
- Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment (National Park Service 2001)
- Calico Trail Establishment Report (USFS 1979)

3.12 Research Natural Areas (San Juan National Forest)

RNAs are national forest lands designated in perpetuity for non-manipulative research and education, and for the preservation of biodiversity. They are part of a long-term national network of ecological reserves managed to allow natural ecological processes to proceed with minimum human intervention. RNAs represent relatively natural, unaltered ecosystems that serve as reference areas to assess the consequences of management actions on similar lands.

Desired conditions and objectives in the LRMP apply to RNAs in general. Specific desired conditions and objectives for individual RNAs established through the revised LRMP will be developed when the management plans for individual RNAs are developed. Table 3.12.1 lists existing RNAs and those that are established through this LRMP, as well as key features of each area. Figure 3.12 displays the location of the RNAs.

Table 3.12.1: Existing and New Research Natural Areas on San Juan National Forest Lands

NA	Key Features
Narraguinne*	Old growth ponderosa pine forests, canyon topography
Williams Creek*	White fir-dominated cool-moist mixed conifer forests
Electra	Glacial topography, old growth ponderosa pine forests
Grizzly Peak	Alpine, fens, willow carrs
Hermosa	Ponderosa pine forests, mixed conifer forests, aspen forests, spruce-fir forests, wetlands, Thurber fescue grasslands
Hidden Mesas	Old growth ponderosa pine forests, mesa topography
Martinez Creek	Old growth spruce-fir forests unburned for centuries
Navajo River	Thurber fescue grasslands, volcanic geology, Colorado cutthroat trout, riparian areas
Needle Mountains	Alpine, riparian, wetlands, aspen forests, granite and quartzite geology
Piedra	Old-growth mixed conifer forests
Porphyry Gulch	Alpine, spruce-fir forests, wetlands

* Existing RNA.

Desired Conditions

- 3.12.1 Natural ecological processes (including succession, fire, insects, diseases, and flooding) are mostly unaltered by humans and shape the composition, structure, function, and landscape pattern of the vegetation.
- 3.12.2 Non-native species are absent or rare.
- 3.12.3 Human influence and structures are absent or rare.

Objectives

- 3.12.4 Within 4 years, complete the management plans and establishment records for all the newly designated RNAs on SJNF lands.
- 3.12.5 Within 4 years, revise the management plans for the Narraguinnep and Williams Creek RNAs.

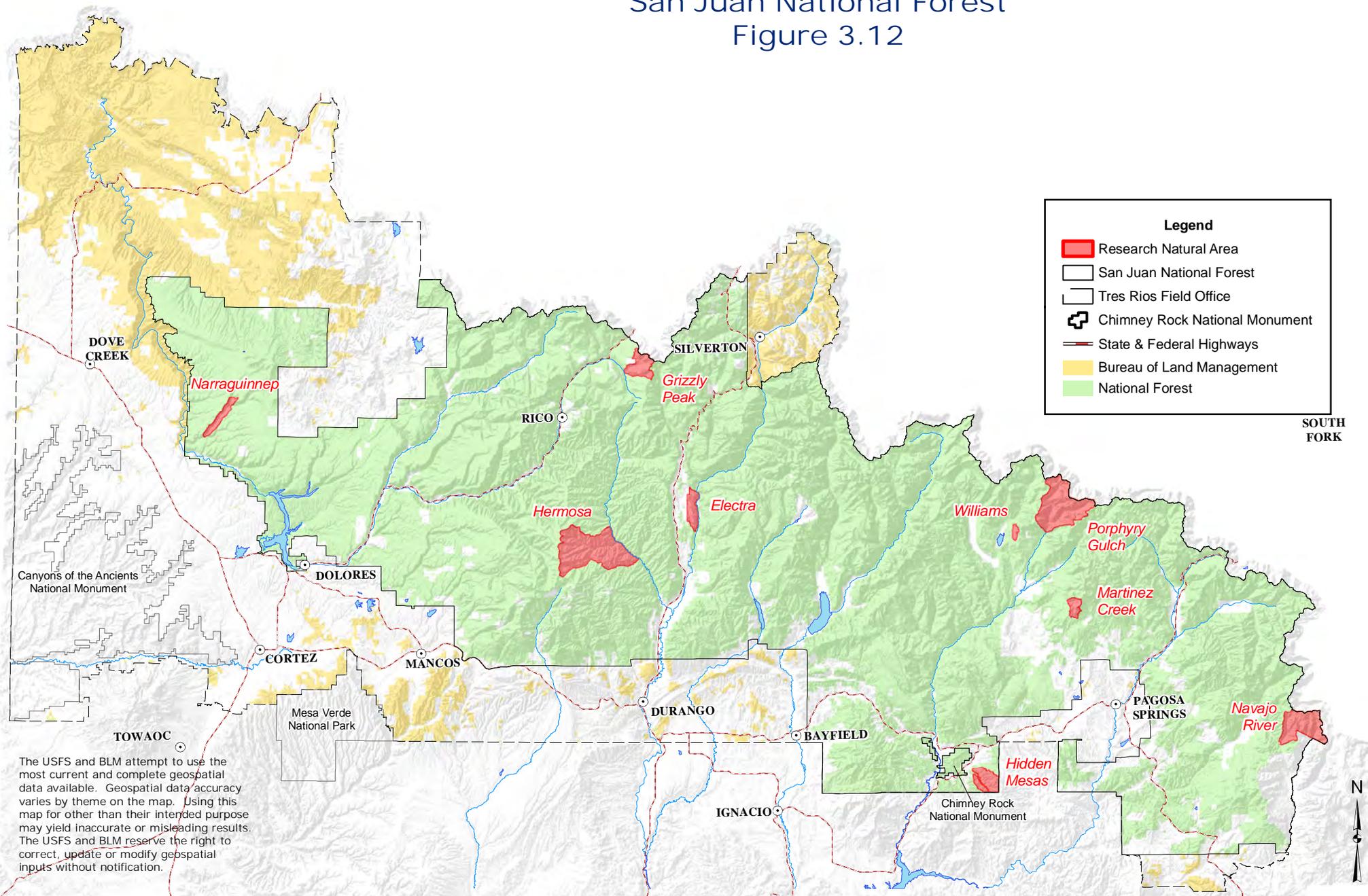
Table 3.12.2: Research Natural Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Prohibited
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Prohibited
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Prohibited
Livestock grazing	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Prohibited
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Prohibited
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Prohibited
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted, NSO
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to natural resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

Research Natural Areas

San Juan National Forest

Figure 3.12



Legend

- Research Natural Area
- San Juan National Forest
- Tres Rios Field Office
- Chimney Rock National Monument
- State & Federal Highways
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Forest

SOUTH
FORK

The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

3.13 Gypsum Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (Tres Rios Field Office)

The Gypsum Valley ACEC contains 13,333 acres of BLM lands within the Big and Little Gypsum Valleys, and ranges in elevation from 6,100 to 6,500 feet. It is located in San Miguel County about 14 miles southwest of Naturita.

The Gypsum Valley ACEC is one of several northwest-southeast-trending valleys formed by the collapse of ancient salt domes. It contains gypsum outcrops and gypsum soils of the Paradox member of the Hermosa Formation that are unique and rare on TRFO lands. The ACEC contains known occurrences and abundant habitat for two BLM sensitive species: Gypsum Valley cat-eye (*Cryptantha gypsophila*) and Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*). The ACEC also contains five species with G1, G2, S1, or S2 NatureServe Plant Community status rankings: *Lecanora gypsicola*, nodule cracked lichen (*Acarospora nodulosa* var. *nodulosa*), largeleaf gypsoplaca lichen (*Gypsoplaca microphylla*), winding mariposa lily (*Calochortus flexuosus*), gyp dropseed (*Sporobolus nealleyi*), and shortstem beardtongue (*Penstemon breviculus*). These plants are imperiled or critically imperiled globally or within Colorado and are at a high or very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity, very restricted ranges, or extremely low populations (see Appendix U).

Several important animal species are found within the proposed ACEC. The rims of Big Gypsum Valley have historically provided nesting habitat for migratory raptors, including peregrine falcons and golden eagles, which are both Colorado BLM State Director's sensitive species. In addition, desert bighorn sheep, another Colorado BLM State Director's sensitive species, use the canyon rims as travel corridors between the benches above the canyon and the Dolores River below. Desert bighorn sheep and other big game species use the Dolores River corridor and the flats of Big Gypsum Valley as important winter range and for other seasonal use.

Desired Conditions

- 3.13.1 Biological soil crusts have high cover and are maintained or increased on the soils of this ACEC.
- 3.13.2 The relevance and importance values of this ACEC, as described in Appendix U, are maintained.
- 3.13.3 The gypsum soils maintain the soil productivity necessary to support and sustain the special status plant species that occur on them.
- 3.13.4 The special status plant species have self-sustaining populations and suitable habitat into which they can expand.
- 3.13.5 Special status plant species and their habitat are managed so that the viability of these species is not adversely affected.

Objectives

- 3.13.6 Limit motorized travel within the ACEC to designated routes to be determined during travel management planning.

Guidelines

- 3.13.7 Ground-disturbing activities should not occur or otherwise be mitigated on gypsum soils within the Gypsum Valley ACEC in order to protect the special status plant species for which they provide habitat.

- 3.13.8 Management activities should minimize, and attempt to avoid where possible, soil displacement, compaction, and trampling in the Gypsum Valley ACEC in order to protect special status plant species and their habitat. Any activities should occur when the plants and soils are least vulnerable to disturbance, such as when soils are frozen or snow covered.
- 3.13.9 Management activities should minimize impacts to nesting raptors and desert big horn sheep. Potential impacts to raptors include excessive noise and human disturbance during critical nesting periods. Potential impacts to desert big horn sheep include conflicts during critical lambing times and concentrated winter use.

Table 3.13.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Gypsum Valley ACEC.

Table 3.13.1: Gypsum Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Not Applicable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted (commercial seed collection may be allowed in some circumstances)
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (avoid gypsum soils)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (avoid gypsum soils)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and sensitive special status species)
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and special status species)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (Possible seasonal closures for recreational rock climbing may be enforced due to seasonal raptor use. See raptor timing limitations table in section 2.3 of this LRMP.)
Mechanical transport	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and sensitive special status plant species)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (to avoid gypsum soils)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply to protect special status species, wildlife, soils, and water resources)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to gypsum soils, special status plant species, wildlife, and water must be minimized)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (to avoid gypsum soils, special status species, wildlife, water, resources)

Additional Guidance

- 43 CFR 3809

3.14 Anasazi Culture Area of Critical Environmental Concern (Tres Rios Field Office)

The Anasazi Culture ACEC retains one of the highest densities of Ancestral Puebloan architectural sites within the planning area. These highly significant sites are critical to understanding Ancestral Puebloan lifeways across the landscape. The geographical uniqueness and the area's setting are important not only for providing much needed context for the interpretation of Northern San Juan Anasazi settlement patterns but also for preserving the future integrity of their material remains. The ACEC also contains the rare plants shortstem beardtongue and *Naturita* milkvetch.

The Anasazi Culture ACEC was originally designated in the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, and encompassed the Mud Springs area, as well as the entirety of the area now known as Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The majority of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument was released from ACEC designation in the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Resource Management Plan (BLM 2010d). As a result of this management and jurisdictional change, the boundary of the Anasazi Culture Area ACEC is now amended to include only the Mud Springs area. The boundary of the ACEC has also been modified to remove the gravel pit.

The management emphasis for the Anasazi Culture Area ACEC is to protect and preserve this area's outstanding archeological sites and setting, and to develop appropriate recreational opportunities that do not result in damage to archaeological or ecological sites. A proactive management approach will take full advantage of the educational, interpretive, recreational, preservation, and scientific opportunities available.

Desired Conditions

- 3.14.1 The Anasazi Culture Area ACEC offers appropriate recreation and interpretive opportunities while archeological resources are preserved.
- 3.14.2 The existing character of the cultural and physical landscape is preserved.
- 3.14.3 Traditional cultural heritage values associated with cultural resources and landscapes within the ACEC are considered and protected.
- 3.14.4 Vegetation is managed to protect and enhance cultural resources.
- 3.14.5 The relevance and importance values of this ACEC, as described in Appendix U, are maintained.
- 3.14.6 Designated roads and trails are rerouted to mitigate impacts to cultural areas.
- 3.14.7 Recreational activities are actively managed in the designated areas, while protecting and mitigating impacts to cultural resources.

Objectives

- 3.14.8 Over the life of the LRMP, implement site steward and "adopt-a-site" programs.
- 3.14.9 Within 7 years, reroute or eliminate unauthorized and designated trails to avoid impacts to archeological sites.

Guidelines

- 3.14.10 Fencing should be used to keep OHV use on designated trails.

Table 3.14.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Anasazi Culture Area ACEC.

Table 3.14.1: Anasazi Culture Area of Critical Environmental Concern Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (minimize or avoid impacts to archeological resources)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical transport	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply to protect recreation and cultural values, water, plants, or other resources)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.15 Mesa Verde Escarpment (Tres Rios Field Office)

Introduction

The Mesa Verde Escarpment area includes BLM lands adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park (Figure 3.27.1). Originally slated for inclusion in the designation of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, this area has the highest density of Ancestral Puebloan architectural sites on BLM lands within the planning area. These highly significant sites are critical to understanding Ancestral Puebloan lifeways across the landscape. The temporal span and distribution of sites indicate that this area was consistently inhabited throughout the Ancestral Puebloan occupation of the Montezuma Valley, from the Basketmaker III period through the Pueblo III (A.D. 600–1300). Additionally, these sites are considered to be in pristine condition because access to this area has been highly restricted. The sites are surrounded by the designated wilderness area within Mesa Verde National Park and privately owned, undeveloped lands. The geophysical uniqueness and the relative isolation of the area's setting is important not only for providing much needed context for the interpretation of Northern San Juan Anasazi settlement patterns, but also for preserving the future integrity of their material remains.

The management emphasis for the Mesa Verde Escarpment is to focus opportunities to provide a scientific research and an outdoor learning laboratory, while ensuring protection and preservation of the area's outstanding archeological sites. A proactive management approach will take full advantage of the educational, preservation, and scientific opportunities available. This area is surrounded by private lands that have not yet been developed; however, focused management of this area is needed to address the impacts related to potential future development. Collaboration with the developers and landowners will be

emphasized in order to develop an understanding and appreciation of the archeological resources, as well as an understanding of the importance of protecting them. Acquisition and/or acquiring easements of adjacent lands to improve access and protection of cultural resources are encouraged.

Desired Conditions

- 3.15.1 Access to the Mesa Verde Escarpment is limited in order to protect and preserve archaeological resources.
- 3.15.2 User-made trails and other routes are rerouted or eliminated in order to avoid impacts to archeological sites.
- 3.15.3 Hazardous fuels are managed in order to protect and preserve archeological resources, and to reduce the risk of wildfire to adjacent private lands.
- 3.15.4 Cultural viewsheds are preserved; incompatible uses or developments are not authorized.
- 3.15.5 The existing character of the cultural and physical landscape is preserved.
- 3.15.6 Traditional cultural heritage values associated with cultural resources and landscapes within the ACEC are considered and protected.
- 3.15.7 Designated routes are limited to maintain the integrity of cultural resource values and for scientific research access.
- 3.15.8 Opportunities are sought to acquire adjacent lands and/or easements to improve access and protection of cultural resources.

Objectives

- 3.15.9 Over the life of the LRMP, conduct phased cultural resource inventory of the area.
- 3.15.10 Over the next 3 years, develop procedures to encourage, foster, and conduct high-quality scientific and scholarly research.

Table 3.15.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Mesa Verde Escarpment.

Table 3.15.1: Mesa Verde Escarpment Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources.
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated roads and trails
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical transport	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.16 Falls Creek Archeological Area (San Juan National Forest)

Falls Creek Valley may contain archeological resources that could aid in efforts to study the earliest agricultural and sedentary societies in the southwestern United States. The area is an important and highly valued place for Native Americans, who view it as part of their heritage. The Falls Creek Archeological Area contains one of the earliest and best dated Basketmaker II sites ever documented. In 1988 the SJNF designated the area as the Falls Creek Archaeological Special Interest Area. These sites are preserved and protected for their scientific, educational, social, and cultural values.

The west side of the Falls Creek Archeological Area is currently closed to the public; however, the area east of the road is frequented on a year-round, daily basis by residents and visitors taking advantage of the close proximity to Durango in order to enjoy the scenic beauty, open space, and recreational opportunities (Figure 3.27.2). The historic landscape, including the irrigated hayfields of the Hidden Valley Ranch, is managed by the SJNF. The Hidden Valley Ranch provides a window into the area's ranching heritage (offering one of the only hayfields open to public recreation anywhere in the region). These fields are managed in order to provide nutritious forage for big game dependent on this mild, southern exposure lowland for winter habitat. This area has been managed by the USFS as critical big game winter range since the land was acquired by the SJNF in 1985.

The Falls Creek Archeological Area will continue to emphasize protection and preservation of significant archaeological deposits, wildlife diversity and maintenance of critical big game winter habitat, and compatible non-motorized recreational opportunities.

Desired Conditions

- 3.16.1 Archeological sites are protected and preserved for their scientific, educational, social, and cultural values.
- 3.16.2 Native American values are respected and preserved, and tribal members are provided special access to the area.
- 3.16.3 Access to the Falls Creek Rock Shelter is allowed to educational institutions through a special use permit.
- 3.16.4 Historic viewsheds (including the historic hayfields) are protected, enhanced, and preserved.
- 3.16.5 Native American tribes and Pueblos are consulted with regard to the development of appropriate off-site educational materials.

- 3.16.6 NAGPRA repatriation of items removed during the 1930s excavation is completed (including analysis of these items necessary in order to complete the cultural affiliation study).
- 3.16.7 The area continues to provide critical big game winter range habitat.
- 3.16.8 Wetlands are managed in order to retain the floral and faunal diversity that currently exists.

Objectives

- 3.16.9 Within 5 years, create a dispersed recreation plan that is congruent with desired conditions and that would be incorporated into the LRMP for the Falls Creek Archeological Area.
- 3.16.10 Within 1 year, implement a site-steward program.
- 3.16.11 Within 5 years, develop and implement a rock art preservation plan in order to mitigate deterioration.
- 3.16.12 Within 5 years, develop appropriate and sensitive off-site interpretive and educational materials. Make the information from the collection analyses available to researchers.

Table 3.16.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Falls Creek Archeological Area.

Table 3.16.1: Falls Creek Archeological Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted (archaeological and historic resources must be protected from impacts from fire)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (archaeological and historic resources must be protected)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted (archaeological and historic resources must be protected)
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted to minimize impacts to archeological resources and protect viewshed
Livestock grazing	Prohibited
Facilities	Restricted to interpretive/informational signs, trailheads, and trails
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated roads and trails
Motorized (winter)	Restricted
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted
Mechanical transport	Restricted to designated roads and trails
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Prohibited
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Administratively not available
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.17 Chimney Rock National Monument (San Juan National Forest)

The Chimney Rock National Monument is a treasure without parallel in the public lands system. The site has been recognized as being “the ultimate outlier” of the Chaco culture (which flourished from A.D. 900 through A.D. 1130). In recognition of its national significance, Congress has designated Chimney Rock as part of the Chacoan Outliers Protection Act of 1995 system. The Chimney Rock area exhibits many of the same hallmarks associated with Chacoan culture that earned Chaco Cultural National Historical Park a World Heritage listing. In addition, the Chimney Rock area also exhibits unique features associated with its location and setting within the landscape. It is the north-easternmost Chacoan site and is hypothesized to be an astronomical observatory. It is valued by Native Americans as part of their ancestral heritage (see Figure 3.27.2). In 2012 it was declared a national monument by Presidential Proclamation.

The Chimney Rock Interpretive Association currently manages this national monument with volunteers under a USFS special use permit. Under the direction of the Presidential Proclamation and this LRMP, Chimney Rock sites will be preserved and protected for their scientific, educational, and cultural values. The national monument will be managed in a manner designed to contribute to tourism (which is one the most powerful regional economic drivers in southwest Colorado). Visitor services and interpretation of the sites would be greatly improved by upgrading the existing visitor center. Archeological resources on Peterson Ridge and adjacent USFS lands should be researched in order to understand their potential relationship to the Chimney Rock National Monument.

Maintaining and developing additional partnerships will be critical for preserving, interpreting, and better understanding Chimney Rock National Monument. Partnerships with Native Americans, Fort Lewis College, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Chaco Interagency Management Group, the University of Colorado, History Colorado, and other research and preservation organizations have been, and will continue to be, essential in achieving these goals.

Desired Conditions

- 3.17.1 Chimney Rock National Monument is managed in an exemplary manner in accordance with the National Monument Proclamation.
- 3.17.2 Native Americans tribes and Pueblos are consulted with regard to the development of appropriate management and interpretation, and are allowed to use the monument for traditional and ceremonial uses, and their values are respected and preserved.
- 3.17.3 Compatible recreational opportunities for the public are provided, in accordance with the National Monument Proclamation.

Objectives

- 3.17.4 Within 3 years, develop a comprehensive management plan for the Chimney Rock National Monument.

Table 3.17.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Chimney Rock National Monument.

Table 3.17.1: Chimney Rock National Monument Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Prescribed burning	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Livestock grazing	Restricted to preserve and protect the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Facilities	Restricted to existing facilities and facilities identified in the Chimney Rock Management Plan
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to entrance road
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted: Horseback travel is prohibited on interpretive trails
Mechanical transport	Restricted; bicycle travel is limited to NFS Road 617 and associated pullouts
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to roads determined to be necessary for administration and protection of the objects identified in the National Monument Proclamation
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Administratively not available, except for parcels already leased in the Peterson Mesa area; If these leases expire they would then be not available; viewshed is NSO
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized; the agency can petition for the area to be withdrawn from mineral entry)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.18 Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area (Tres Rios Field Office)

Introduction

The Spring Creek HMA is located approximately 40 miles northeast of Dove Creek, Colorado (in Dolores and San Miguel Counties). The HMA comprises approximately 21,000 acres of BLM-administered public land.

Wild horses and burros are managed under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, as amended (Public Law 92-195). The 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (BLM 1985) designated a wild horse emphasis area for the Spring Creek Basin. Portions of the Spring Creek HMA also emphasize watershed management (in order to reduce salinity into the Colorado River and for the watershed health of the McKenna Peak WSA). Scattered occurrences of the BLM Sensitive plant Gypsum Valley cat-eye (*Cryptantha gypsophila*) are present within the HMA. There is also an occurrence of pygmy sagebrush (*Artemisia pygmaea*) within the HMA. There is only one other occurrence of this G4, S1 ranked species in Colorado.

A Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) was approved in October 1986 (BLM 1986b) and revised in 1994 (BLM 1994a). The HMAP objective is to maintain appropriate management level between 35 and 65 adult horses or an average of 50 adult horses. In 2005, additional analysis was completed in order to determine whether the existing management level was appropriate (based on an opportunity to provide additional AUMs for the herd area). The analysis showed that current management level was appropriate, considering that rangeland health standards (43 CFR 4180) were not being met, and that the few available AUMs would not improve herd genetics (#EA-800-2005-027; BLM 2005). In 2011, an environmental analysis was completed that approved instituting a fertility control program (DOI-BLM-CO-SO10-2011-0062) (BLM 2011i).

Desired Conditions

- 3.18.1 The Spring Creek Basin wild horse herd population is within an acceptable range.
- 3.18.2 Adequate genetic viability and variability exists in order to maintain a healthy wild horse herd.
- 3.18.3 Vegetation is diverse and provides sufficient cover in order to reduce salinity and to prevent sediment from reaching Disappointment Creek and the Dolores River.
- 3.18.4 The herd is managed via traditional helicopter gathers, bait trapping, fertility control programs, or other methods accepted by the National Wild Horse and Burro program.
- 3.18.5 Vegetation within the HMA is in a stable or upward trend, including diverse species composition and reduced erosion to provide a resilient ecosystem.
- 3.18.6 The Gypsum Valley cat-eye and pygmy sagebrush populations are maintained.

Objectives

- 3.18.7 Within 5 years, revise the Spring Creek Basin HMAP (BLM 1994a) to incorporate specific goals, objectives, and techniques to guide management of the Spring Creek HMA.
- 3.18.8 Within 5 years, revise the Spring Creek Basin HMAP (BLM 1994a) to incorporate specific goals, objectives, and techniques to guide management of the Spring Creek HMA, including management of Gypsum Valley cat-eye and pygmy sagebrush.

Table 3.18.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Spring Creek Wild Horse HMA.

Table 3.18.1: Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Not Applicable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted opportunities for firewood; however, gathering other forest products may be acceptable as long as gathering is not detrimental to wild horse management
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted to minimize disruption to the herd
Livestock grazing	Allowable; retire or redistribute available AMUs to watershed and soil protection as opportunity becomes available or permits return to BLM.
Facilities	Restricted
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to on roads only
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to on roads only
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Restricted to on roads only.
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Allowable
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Allowable

Additional Guidance

- Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971
- Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978 Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended
- 43 CFR 4700, Protection, Management, and Control of Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros
- 43 CFR 4100
- Colorado Public Land Health Standards EA and FONSI, 1997
- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in the 13 Western States (BLM 1991b)
- Integrated Weed Management Plan (CO-800-2008-075 EA) (BLM 2011c)
- BLM Manual 9015
- BLM Partners Against Weeds (BLM 1996)
- Various BLM IMs and Information Bulletins relating to wild horse and burro management
- Rules Pertaining to the Administration and Enforcement of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act (8 CCR 1203-10)
- Spring Creek Basin Wild Horse Management Plan (BLM 1994a)
- Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level in the Spring Creek Basin HMA (EA #CO-800-2005-027) (BLM 2005)

3.19 Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area (Tres Rios Field Office)

Wildlife management areas provide for habitat features that are special, or limiting, to certain wildlife species. They provide the opportunity for maintaining diverse components for species sustainability found within each area’s habitat management plan (including the restoration, maintenance, and/or improvement of these features for the target species, as well as for other species with habitats within the area). Timing stipulations and use restrictions may be applied in these areas in order to preserve diversity components.

The Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area consists of approximately 1,512 acres of BLM-administered public lands and approximately 3,400 acres of state lands administered by CPW. The area is located northwest of, and immediately adjacent to, Durango. Historically, the area has served as winter range for large herds of elk, mule deer, and a remnant population of bighorn sheep. Breeding populations of golden eagle, prairie falcon, and peregrine falcon add to the significance of the area. The area also supports populations of Merriam’s wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). More than half of the elk herd of CPW Game Management Unit 74 is dependent on this area in severe winters. Rapid development in the Durango area has increased impacts to wildlife resources in the area due to land conversions, migration corridor disruption, and increased recreational pressures to disturbance-sensitive wildlife species. The TRFO works closely with CPW to manage the habitat and will seek future opportunities to consolidate ownership where practicable to improve wildlife management emphasis of the area.

Desired Conditions

- 3.19.1 Habitat diversity components are secure, undisturbed, and sufficient to sustain the wildlife populations that depend on the Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area in an urbanizing environment.

Program Emphasis

Under the direction of this LRMP, management emphasis would focus on habitat features and effectiveness for raptor reproduction, big game winter range, and other improvements for non-game birds and small mammals, in coordination and conjunction with adjacent CPW lands. The Perins Peak Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (BLM et al. 2003), which was prepared by the BLM in cooperation with the USFWS and CPW, outlines the emphasis and management objectives for the area. Within this Habitat Management Plan, a comprehensive list of management objectives is provided for raptors, big game winter range, habitat improvements, and public access.

Table 3.19.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area.

Table 3.19.1: Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (project design should maintain habitat effectiveness and species objectives as outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Livestock grazing	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan; winter use is not allowed)
Mechanical transport	Prohibited
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (construction timing, construction type, route, and use and timing of use conforms to habitat and species needs described in the Habitat Management Plan)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted - (CSU and TL, as defined for leasable minerals; maintains habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

Additional Guidance

Other guidance includes the Perins Peak Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (CO-03 WHA-T1) (BLM et al. 2003).

3.20 O'Neal Hill Special Botanical Area (San Juan National Forest)

The O'Neal Hill Special Botanical Area is designated as a special area on the SJNF to protect and preserve its rare plant species. It contains the largest known population of Pagosa Springs bladderpod (*Lesquerella pruinoso*), which is a yellow-flowered member of the mustard family that occurs only near Pagosa Springs and in a small area in northern New Mexico. Pagosa Springs bladderpod has a G1 NatureServe conservation status rank, which means it is critically imperiled globally due to extreme rarity. The species is also on the Region 2 Regional Forester's Sensitive Species list. This botanical area, which is located about 14 miles north of Pagosa Springs, is about 130 acres in size and occurs at an elevation of about 8,100 feet. The area occurs on relatively flat plains and hills, and is primarily associated with the Mancos shale geologic formation.

Desired Conditions

- 3.20.1 Pagosa Springs bladderpod has self-sustaining populations.
- 3.20.2 Favorable habitat conditions exist for Pagosa Springs bladderpod.
- 3.20.3 Invasive plant species in the botanical area are absent or rare.
- 3.20.4 Pagosa Springs bladderpod is not trending toward federal listing under the ESA.

Objectives

- 3.20.5 Within 4 years, develop a management plan.

Standards

- 3.20.6 Management activities (including road construction) and motorized travel must not occur in the O'Neal Hill Special Botanical Area unless they are needed to achieve desired conditions or objectives, or for research or restoration.

Table 3.20.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the O'Neal Hill Special Botanical Area.

Table 3.20.1: O'Neal Hill Special Botanical Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Prohibited
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (impacts to sensitive plant species should be minimized)
Livestock grazing	Restricted (impacts to sensitive plant species should be minimized)
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Prohibited
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Restricted (impacts to sensitive plant species should be minimized)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Prohibited
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO stipulation may apply)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry; impacts to the botanical area must be avoided or minimized to the extent practicable)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (impacts to sensitive plant species should be minimized)

3.21 Chattanooga Special Botanical Area (San Juan National Forest)

The Chattanooga Special Botanical Area is designated as a special area on SJNF lands to protect and preserve its rare plant species, rare plant communities, rare organic soils, and rare riparian area/wetland ecosystems. It contains iron fens, willow carrs, rich fens, ponds, and mineral springs. The iron fens are fed by highly acidic, mineralized springs from the west. Limonite terraces within the iron fens perch the water table and form an extensive network of pools and ponds. Colorado's iron fens, including the ones in this botanical area, are particularly unique because their water pH is similar to acid poor fens, whereas the ionic strength of their water is similar to rich fens (Cooper et al. 2002). The rich fens and willow carrs are fed by groundwater from the east and directly from Mineral Creek. This botanical area, which is located about 5 miles northwest of Silverton, is about 75 acres in size and occurs at 10,000 to 10,400 feet in elevation.

The iron fens of the Chattanooga Special Botanical Area are associated with the Engelmann spruce/bog birch/water sedge/sphagnum plant community, which has a G2 NatureServe conservation status rank, meaning it is imperiled globally due to its rarity. That community is characterized by an overstory of Engelmann spruce and bog birch (*Betula nana*), and a thick understory of whortleberry (*Vaccinium caespitosum*) and sphagnum (including *Sphagnum angustifolium*, *S. balticum*, and *S. girgensohnii*). *Sphagnum angustifolium* and *S. balticum* are on the Region 2 Regional Forester's Sensitive Species list. Until its discovery in this botanical area, the range of *Sphagnum balticum* in North America was thought to extend south only to southern British Columbia. Other notable species in these iron fens include bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), beaked sedge (*C. utriculata*), and wintergreen (*Gaultheria humifusa*). The rich fens and willow carrs are dominated by diamondleaf willow (*Salix planifolia*) and water sedge, and the mineral springs contain a rare liverwort (*Jungermannia rubra*).

Desired Conditions

- 3.21.1 The rare plants are vigorous and have self-sustaining populations.
- 3.21.2 The ecosystems and habitats on which the rare plants and plant community depend are sustained.
- 3.21.3 The ecological integrity of the fens and other wetlands are intact (including their native biota, mineral and organic soils, and hydrology).
- 3.21.4 The fens and wetlands have sustainable hydrologic conditions.
- 3.21.5 Invasive plant species are absent or rare.

Objectives

- 3.21.6 Determine the amount of snowmobile use that is occurring in and adjacent to the Chattanooga Special Botanical Area.
- 3.21.7 If snowmobile use in and adjacent to the Chattanooga Special Botanical Area increases significantly, put up interpretive signs that describe the purpose and values of the area and that notify the public that snowmobile use in the area is prohibited.
- 3.21.8 Within 4 years, develop a management plan.

Standards

- 3.21.9 Management activities (including road construction) and motorized travel must not occur in the Chattanooga Special Botanical Area unless they are needed to achieve desired conditions or objectives, or for research or restoration.

Table 3.21.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Chattanooga Special Botanical Area.

Table 3.21.1: Chattanooga Special Botanical Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Prohibited
Prescribed burning	Prohibited
Mechanical fuels treatment	Prohibited
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Prohibited
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (maintenance of existing utility line may be allowed)
Livestock grazing	Prohibited
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Prohibited
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Prohibited
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Prohibited
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO stipulation may be applied)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry; impacts to the botanical area must be avoided or minimized to the extent practicable)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.22 Smoothing Iron and Boggy Draw Old Growth Recruitment Areas (San Juan National Forest)

Old growth recruitment areas on SJNF lands are special areas where existing or potential old growth stands are managed for their old growth values through both active and passive management. They are also places that can be used for research, education, and interpretation.

The Smoothing Iron Old Growth Recruitment Area, which is located on Haycamp Mesa about 6 air miles northeast of the town of Dolores near Spruce Water Canyon, occurs on about 2,500 acres at an elevation of approximately 8,200 feet. The Boggy Draw Old Growth Recruitment Area, which is located about 6 air miles northeast of Dolores near House Creek, occurs on about 2,500 acres at an elevation of approximately 8,100 feet. These areas, which display old growth ponderosa pine stands on mesa tops with gentle slopes, are rare in the tableland landscapes on the west side of the SJNF.

Desired Conditions

- 3.22.1 Existing old growth ponderosa pine stands and their old growth attributes are protected.
- 3.22.2 Existing old growth ponderosa pine stands become larger as more of the lands adjacent to them develop old growth attributes.
- 3.22.3 Low-intensity ground fire occurs with a frequency that is similar to that which occurred during the reference period in ponderosa pine forests (12–30 years).
- 3.22.4 Desirable native plant species, including Arizona fescue, are abundant and well distributed.
- 3.22.5 Invasive plant species are absent or minor.
- 3.22.6 Evidence of active management, such as stumps and roads, are absent or minor.
- 3.22.7 Federal agencies and the public use these areas for research, education, and interpretation.

Objectives

- 3.22.8 Within the next 15 years, use low-intensity prescribed fire or low-intensity wildfire for ecological benefit to maintain, improve, or restore the composition, structure, or function of the ponderosa pine stands.
- 3.22.9 Within the next 15 years, use timber harvest treatments (if necessary) to maintain, improve, or restore the composition, structure, or function of the ponderosa pine stands.
- 3.22.10 Within the next 15 years, decommission roads that are not needed to achieve desired conditions.
- 3.22.11 Within the next 10 years, develop and implement interpretive plans for both areas.

Table 3.22.1: Smoothing Iron and Boggy Draw Old Growth Recruitment Areas Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (to low-intensity)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (to low-intensity)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (to meet desired conditions)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted (to meet desired conditions)
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Prohibited
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (only designated routes)
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Restricted (only designated routes)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (to meet desired conditions)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	NSO
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry; impacts to old growth areas must be avoided or minimized to the extent practicable)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.23 Dolores River Canyon

Introduction

The Dolores River, a tributary of the Colorado River, flows approximately 250 miles from its origins in the San Juan Mountains into Grand County, Utah, where it joins the Colorado River. A few miles below McPhee Reservoir, at the Bradfield Bridge Recreation Site, the Dolores River enters lands managed by the TRFO and begins an 85-mile journey through some of the most scenic canyon country in the southwestern United States. This stretch of river, known as the Dolores River Canyon, represents an astounding array of cultural and natural resources, which are reflected in the myriad of special management prescriptions layered across its landscape. Key resources in the area include recreation, suitable WSR segments, wilderness characteristics, cultural resources, geology, rare and unique plants and plant communities, riparian ecosystems, and wildlife. Overlying it all is a scenic backdrop of sheer cliffs, benches, and mesas that rival any of the more nationally recognized landscapes in the region.

Recreation

The Dolores River Canyon provides opportunities for a broad spectrum of recreational experiences. The river canyon is probably best known for whitewater rafting and kayaking (up to Class IV) beginning at the Bradfield Bridge boat access near Dove Creek. Since the construction of the McPhee Dam and Reservoir, boating has been dependent on flow releases and generally requires between 200 (canoes and kayaks) and 1,000 cubic feet per second (large rafts). These releases require a good snow year and generally occur between late May and early June.

While whitewater boating might be the most popular activity enjoyed in the canyon, there are outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, OHV touring, mountain biking, and wildlife viewing as well. Developed camping is provided in the upper reaches of the canyon (Bradfield Bridge and Box Elder campgrounds), while more primitive, dispersed camping is required for overnight stays further downriver.

The river canyon from Bradfield to Bedrock was identified as an SRMA in the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (BLM 1985) and a River Corridor Management Plan was completed in 1990 (BLM 1990). This portion of the Dolores River Canyon will continue to be managed as an SRMA, divided into several RMZs to provide for specific recreational outcomes and benefits (see Appendix E).

Wild and Scenic River Eligibility

This entire stretch of the Dolores River is suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System. ORVs have been identified for the reach as a whole and include recreation and scenery (whitewater boating and sandstone cliffs), fish and wildlife (roundtail chub [*Gila robusta robusta*], flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead sucker), geology (sandstone cliffs), ecology (privet [*Forestiera neomexicana*] and Eastwood's monkeyflower [*Mimulus eastwoodiae*]), and cultural resources (historic and prehistoric sites).

This stretch of river has been divided into each of the three eligibility classifications (recreational, wild, and scenic). The segment from Bradfield Bridge to the Dove Creek Pump Station (Mt. Sheep Point) is suitable as a wild classification due to the lack of roads, motorized use, and developed trails. Dove Creek Pump Station to Disappointment Creek is suitable as a scenic classification despite Snaggletooth Road, which is generally unobtrusive to the surrounding landscape. The segment from Disappointment Creek to the Little Gypsum Bridge is suitable as a recreational designation due to the presence of the community of Slickrock and the access provided via multiple county roads. Finally, from the Little Gypsum Bridge down through the Dolores River Canyon WSA to Bedrock is suitable as a wild classification.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The upper portion of the canyon (from Bradfield Bridge to nearly Disappointment Creek) was inventoried in 2011 and found to have wilderness characteristics. A portion of this unit, known as the Snaggletooth unit, from Bradfield Bridge to Mt. Sheep Point, will be managed for its wilderness characteristics.

Wilderness Study Areas

The northernmost portion of the Dolores River Canyon within the TRFO is within part of the Dolores River WSA, and is managed by the TRFO so as not to impair the ability of Congress to make wilderness determination at some point in the future.

Cultural Resources

The Dolores River Canyon has been a focal point of human interest, use, and occupancy dating back at least 11,000 years. Evidence of this use can be seen and experienced along the length of the river. Cultural resources include rock shelters, petroglyph panels, resource procurement and processing areas, and historic camps, homesteads, and trails. These sites contribute to our understanding of the area and its importance to the human experience over time.

Geology

The Dolores River is up to 1,100 feet deep in places and cuts through multiple geologic formations spanning nearly 300 million years of earth's history from the Pennsylvanian through Cretaceous periods. Rock formations in the canyon record the passing of ancient seas and vast deserts. The prominent formation is the cliffs of Wingate sandstone. Major tributaries such as Coyote Wash, Bull Canyon, and Wild Steer Canyon display slickrock sculpted by wind and water and provide additional habitat for unique plant and animal populations.

Rare/Unique Plants and Plant Communities and Riparian Ecosystems

Another natural resource that makes the Dolores River Canyon special is the variety of plant life found within its confines. Tucked along the canyon floor, along the cliff faces, or hidden within hanging gardens are rare, unique, and even globally impaired species. Old growth ponderosa groves, box elder, and Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) galleries provide shade along the river's edge for boaters and animals alike. The New Mexico privet is a riparian shrub that is relatively common in the area, but extremely rare on a global scale. Also found in the canyon, usually in hanging gardens around seeps and overhangs, is the bright red Eastwood's monkeyflower, which is also considered extremely rare or imperiled within the state, and rare globally. In addition to rare plants and plant communities, the Dolores River Canyon includes excellent examples of more common plant communities useful as biodiversity reserves and reference areas. Many of these species and communities are threatened by human activities and invasive, non-native species. The BLM is an active member and supporter of the Dolores River Restoration Partnership, which was founded to reduce or eliminate the threats to native vegetation and riparian functionality from tamarisk and other invasive species.

Wildlife

The Dolores River Canyon provides important habitat for a variety of species ranging from big game animals to tree frogs. The canyon is home to a population of desert bighorn, one of only three herds in the state. To aid in the viability of this herd, a seasonal motorized closure is placed on a BLM-administered portion of Snaggletooth Road during the spring lambing period (February 1–April 30, inclusive) from near Slickrock to Snaggletooth Rapid. The canyon also provides habitat for peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and other sensitive or listed avian species.

The river itself provides crucial habitat for many aquatic species including roundtail chub, flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluenose sucker (*Notropis welaka*), red-spotted toad (*Bufo punctatus*), tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), and canyon tree frog. Water levels in the river are controlled by the dam below McPhee Reservoir, which was constructed by the US Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Dolores Project and is operated by the Dolores Water Conservancy District.

Desired Conditions

- 3.23.1 Key resources in the canyon (including recreation, WSR suitability, wilderness characteristics, archeology, geology, rare and unique plants and plant communities, riparian ecosystems, and wildlife) are protected and preserved.
- 3.23.2 Invasive species (including tamarisk, Russian knapweed [*Acroptilon repens*], and Canada thistle [*Cirsium arvense*]) are minor components of the riparian systems of the Dolores River and its tributaries.
- 3.23.3 The scenic integrity of the canyon is unaltered and or otherwise mitigated to keep structures and new construction out of view from the river bottom.
- 3.23.4 Recreational opportunities within the canyon corridor are maintained and enhanced.
- 3.23.5 Access to the river is maintained or improved outside areas classified as wild.

Objectives

- 3.23.6 Use integrated pest management on the Dolores River Canyon to treat invasive species.
- 3.23.7 Over the life of the LRMP, restore riparian and aquatic ecosystems in the Dolores River Canyon and its tributaries.

3.23.8 Over the next 20 years, enhance the resiliency of Dolores River Canyon corridor and provide refugia for species on 100 acres of TRFO lands in the Dolores River watershed through implementation of travel management decisions, recreation management plans in the watershed ecosystems, invasive species management projects, or other management activities.

Guidelines

3.23.9 Management activities and recreational use should avoid or minimizes impacts to rare or unique plant communities.

Table 3.23.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Dolores River Canyon.

Table 3.23.1: Dolores River Canyon Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted within the canyon to protect other resource values; naturally ignited and human-made fire will be suppressed
Prescribed burning	Restricted to management actions that enhance resource characteristics
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to management actions that enhance resource characteristics
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Restricted to areas above Canyon Rim within ponderosa and oak Brush treatment area
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted to areas above Canyon Rim within ponderosa and oak brush treatment area.
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted to areas above the canyon rim
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (to minimize impacts to canyon resources and protect the viewshed)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (development of recreation facilities may be allowed)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (see section 2.14; additionally, there is a motorized timing limitation within desert bighorn lambing areas between February 1 and June 30)
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (see section 2.14; additionally, there is a motorized timing limitation within desert bighorn lambing areas between February 1 and June 30)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (see section 2.14; timing restrictions may apply to protect wildlife habitat)
Mechanical transport	Allowable outside the lands managed for wilderness characteristics
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to existing county roads within the canyon
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO and TL leasing stipulations may apply for the canyon corridor, viewshed protection, and to protect desert bighorn lambing areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry; impacts to canyon resources and viewshed should be minimized to the extent practicable)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

Additional Guidance

- Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (BLM 1990)

3.24 Silverton

The Silverton area includes the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway, portions of the San Juan Skyway, the Silverton SRMA, and the town of Silverton (see Figure 3.27.1). The Silverton Ski Area and the Durango-Silverton Narrow-Gauge Railroad also operate within this area. A portion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail pass through this area.

The Silverton area has outstanding outdoor opportunities, extraordinary scenery (accessed by two byways and an extensive network of rough roads and trails), sensitive plant and animal habitats, and diverse year-round nature-based recreation and adventure tourism. The town of Silverton's history, and vintage architecture, is recognized by residents and visitors as a precious cultural resource. Silverton, which has strong community values and a "sense of place," is a place where it is possible to "step back in time."

More than 300,000 people visit the area annually primarily due to heritage tourism, recreation, and wilderness access. These are the main economic contributors to local communities. Activities for visitors include camping, hiking, mountain biking, wildlife and wildflower viewing, winter sports, OHV use, and heritage tourism. The area is well suited to day trips, as well as to multi-day excursions.

Situated primarily above 9,000 feet, this is largely a sensitive and beautiful subalpine to alpine environment. This area has important biological value (including its essential function as a linkage area for wildlife across the San Juan Mountains and north to other parts of Colorado). The valleys and mountain passes provide key linkage corridors for migratory wildlife and wide-ranging carnivores (e.g., Canada lynx [*Lynx canadensis*]). The high country provides a large block of alpine and tundra habitat that is contiguous with adjacent public lands. This provides key habitat areas for a suite of unique species specially adapted to this fragile and harsh environment (including the endangered Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly [*Boloria acrocneuma*], the white-tailed ptarmigan, and the brown-capped rosy-finch [*Leucosticte australis*], Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and Colorado cutthroat trout). The Silverton area contains peat-forming wetlands called fens. Fens require thousands of years to develop and cannot easily be restored once damaged. Rare and sensitive plants are found only in these fens. The Silverton area is also the only area where iron fens are found within the planning area. Iron fens are a unique type of fen found in areas with geology that produces acidic, metal-rich conditions. The San Juan Mountains are one of only a few places in the world that contain iron fens.

Many local residents are active stewards of this area and have strong concerns regarding the protection of the unique environment. Concerns expressed by residents and visitors include issues related to recreation and travel management, cultural resource protection, sheep grazing, protection of scenic views and fragile tundra, adequate visitor information and services, mining impacts, economic benefits, conflicts between residents and tourists, and conflicts between motorized and other users.

The combination of road access, rewarding vistas, and outstanding remnants of the hard-rock mining heritage make the Silverton area one of the most spectacular high-elevation landscapes in the United States.

Protecting the heritage of the amazingly persistent hard-rock miners is vital to preserving the nation's history, as well as the allure of the Silverton area. Historic sites within the Silverton area include mills, dams, hydro-electric power houses, water flumes, shaft houses, tramways, miners' cabins, assayer offices, boarding houses, powder houses, toll roads, railroads, mining camps, and countless mine shafts and adits. These sites are deteriorating in the harsh environment and as a result of the impacts from the increasing numbers of visitors. Private land development also threatens the integrity of the cultural landscape.

Mineral exploration, mining, and ore processing was the focus of activity in the Silverton landscape since the late 1800s. The remnants of this activity provide the road network and historic focus for heritage tourism and also left a legacy of hazardous open mines and water quality issues necessitating the need for an AML program. The AML programs on both USFS and BLM lands have the dual focus of mitigating physical safety hazards of abandoned mines and improving water quality that has been degraded by mining. The physical safety closures are often done in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, who can efficiently combine work on federal and private

lands. Water quality work can consist of removal and reclamation of mine waste rock piles and mill tailings piles, water control to keep water from getting to mining areas where it can be contaminated, or treatment of contaminated water. The BLM and USFS partner with numerous entities in this work, including the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, USGS, EPA, USFWS, mining industry, environmental and educational groups, and community members.

As the result of the configuration of mineral patents and private lands, San Juan County has a somewhat fragmented land ownership pattern of public lands isolated by private lands sometimes called “splinters” or “slivers.” These splinters or slivers can range in size from less than an acre up to 40 acres and oftentimes make accessibility to public lands difficult.

In recent years, the uses of mineral patents and private lands in San Juan County have shifted from mining to recreation and residential uses, either seasonal or permanent. The proliferation of cabins on parcels of 5 acres or more has increased ROW applications to the BLM for access and other infrastructure needs. Consolidation of ownership would result in more efficient and effective land management for federal, state, and local governments. This consolidation can take place through proposals for land acquisitions, sales (disposals), and/or exchanges. The BLM may retain rights such as conservation easements, trail easements, or ROWs in these transactions for the public’s benefit.

In keeping with the BLM mission of “serving communities,” lands in San Juan County near Silverton may be made available for recreation and public purposes or sold either competitively or directly for expansion of residential, commercial, recreation, or infrastructure uses.

Residents, visitors, and public land managers all see many opportunities for sustainable conservation of the Silverton area. Due to its complex resource values, and to the high levels of public interest, successful strategies for conservation will continue to depend on partnerships (including with local, state, tribal, and other federal agencies; historic preservation advocates and agencies; non-profit organizations; interpretive associations; commercial recreation providers; and local businesses). Management tools (including land acquisition, land exchange, and conservation easements) would be critical to the protection of high-priority lands within the larger cultural landscape, the mitigation of resource impacts, and the improvement in land conservation areas or national monuments, which may also be considered, in order to give the area appropriate recognition and protection.

The Alpine Triangle Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) provides guidance for the management and interpretation of cultural resources in the Silverton SRMA (BLM 1994b) (see Appendix E). Under the direction of the LRMP, management will be intensive and include visitor facilities for interpretation and resource protection (including parking, trailhead facilities, signage, and trail maintenance). Regulations and visitor guidance will also play a role in protecting resources, as well as in enhancing visitor experience (including camping restrictions, travel management for motorized and non-motorized uses, resource protection, and visitor safety related to mines).

Successful implementation of the LRMP will depend on ownership patterns. Cooperation with state historic and heritage programs; San Juan, Ouray, and Hinsdale Counties; local communities and their residents; local, state, tribal, and other federal agencies; non-profit organizations; interpretive associations; businesses; and public land permittees will be emphasized. Expansion of on-the-ground signs and patrols to effective levels will also be key to successful heritage tourism and resource protection. Special emphasis will be given to the protection of cultural viewsheds that are in jeopardy due to the impacts of incompatible private development.

Desired Conditions

3.24.1 Interpretation of the historic landscapes and features of the Silverton SRMA is made available through a range of effective and appropriate venues. Information is designed to enhance the touring experience and encourage the greatest extent of appreciation and protection of these precious assets.

- 3.24.2 Commercial summer and winter recreation opportunities are available through permitted outfitter/guides and the Silverton Ski Area.
- 3.24.3 Recreational uses (including motorized/non-motorized travel or camping) are at sustainable levels within ROS settings.
- 3.24.4 Recreation management compatible with the area's cultural and natural resource management goals is allowed and promoted.
- 3.24.5 High-priority historic resources are stabilized and preserved for future generations.
- 3.24.6 The built environment supports essential visitor services, heritage tourism and interpretation, and recreation opportunities. Design elements (including scale, materials, and colors) complement the natural environment and are consistent with the architectural vernacular of local historic structures.
- 3.24.7 Support services are located within, or close to, gateway communities.
- 3.24.8 Local communities serve as gateways to the Silverton area, take an active role in stewardship of surrounding public lands, and receive lifestyle, community, and economic benefit. The site-stewardship program and TRFO presence are fully effective for resource protection, visitor contact, education, and safety.
- 3.24.9 Plants and wildlife unique to the area (including Canada lynx/lynx habitat, fens, bighorn sheep, native Colorado Cutthroat trout, Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly, white-tailed ptarmigan, and brown-capped rosy-finch, and other alpine obligate species) are effectively protected and managed in conjunction with other actions.
- 3.24.10 Water quality meets or exceeds state standards, where possible.
- 3.24.11 Although private land access is provided, as required, opportunities for protection of key resources are sought through the county development process, easement options, and acquisition.
- 3.24.12 High-priority parcels of land are protected and preserved through methods that include acquisition, land exchange, or conservation easements.
- 3.24.13 Where public lands 1) are isolated by surrounding private parcels with limited or no public access, 2) have minimal cultural/natural resource or recreation values to protect, and 3) are not needed for any federal project or resource management activity, the BLM may consider exchanges, sales or other disposal in order to improve the overall management of the public lands. Each proposal will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, including environmental analysis under NEPA.
- 3.24.14 The responsibility to provide appropriate marketing and adequate interpretation, conservation education, and recreation information is understood and shared by agencies, partners, commercial outfitter/guides, and businesses.
- 3.24.15 The transportation system throughout the Silverton area meets the desire of visitors for access, provides a range of interesting touring experiences, and is designed in order to limit access to sites in need of protection.
- 3.24.16 AML and mining clean-up activities address resource protection and public safety.
- 3.24.17 Lands would remain open to mineral entry except where limited and specific needs for withdrawal or segregation. When possible, new mining projects would consider reclamation and remediation of historic mining operations to the extent economically, technologically, and legally possible.

Table 3.24.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Silverton area.

Table 3.24.1: Silverton Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (wildfire for ecological benefit would be allowed in high-elevation spruce-fir, but emphasis will be put on protecting historic structures and private property)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used in order to improve wildlife habitat, including bighorn sheep.)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Restricted
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted to Christmas trees, firewood post and poles, mushrooms, and medicinal plants collected in the area
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (surface disturbance should be minimized; utilize existing corridors and ROW where practicable)
Livestock grazing	Restricted to grazing allotments.
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (allowable for access to valid existing rights and for effective public access.)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply)
Minerals - locatable	Restricted (allowable where natural, cultural, and/or scenic values are not degraded)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)

3.25 HD Mountains (San Juan National Forest)

The HD Mountains (MA 2) total approximately 49,000 acres (see Figure 3.27.2). The area's elevation ranges from just over 6,000 feet to just under 9,000 feet. Private and state lands (located primarily along the flanks of the USFS-administered lands) make up a small portion of the HD Mountains area (and are not subject to the direction of the LRMP). A 25,140-acre CRA within the HD Mountains forms the core of the MA.

The roadless area provides many social and ecological benefits. As urban areas grow in southwest Colorado, undeveloped private lands continue to be converted to urban areas and rural infrastructure. In the increasingly developed landscape in the vicinity of the HD Mountains, this large unfragmented tract of land serves a critical role (in that it provides functioning watersheds and biological strongholds that promote diversity for plant and animal populations). The area provides a large, relatively undisturbed landscape with opportunities for dispersed outdoor recreation (opportunities that diminish as open space and natural settings are developed elsewhere). The area also serves as a bulwark against the spread of non-native invasive plant species and provides a reference area for study and research related to development in the roadless area.

The HD Mountains area encompasses the northeastern portion of the San Juan Basin (which is a geologic structure containing one of the largest natural gas reservoirs in the world). The majority of the area has been leased for oil and gas development, and markets have prompted additional interest and investments in gas wells and associated facilities and infrastructure in the San Juan Basin. Natural gas development in the HD Mountains is controversial due to the potential impacts to roadless area values, surface water and groundwater, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, property values, tax revenues, employment, and air quality in the Weminuche wilderness area and the Mesa Verde National Park Class 1 air quality areas.

Companies or individuals holding existing valid leases have legal, non-discretionary development rights. Over the next few decades, as gas is produced and transported, the impacts of development will be evident; however, in the long-term, the SJNF would manage its lands so that facilities (including all surface and subsurface features related to management activities) would be reclaimed when no longer needed, so that altered lands would be restored to natural conditions. Planning for, and administering, management activities with the intent to ultimately reclaim development areas will make for a more rapid and successful recovery to natural conditions. An important element of this recovery effort is the approximately 22,400 acres of the roadless area that would remain unroaded under the gas field development plan authorized by the Northern San Juan Basin FEIS and ROD (BLM and USFS 2006; USFS and BLM 2007).

Although the primary values and important characteristics listed below are not all unique to the HD Mountains, the fact that they all occur in the same area makes the HD Mountains unique and deserving of special management approaches. The overall goal of management approaches in the HD Mountains is to maintain, improve, and/or return these values and characteristics to the landscape. These values and characteristics are described below.

The Northern San Jan Basin FEIS and ROD was signed on April 4, 2007, and provides guidance for gas-field development in the HD Mountains area. The development approach required by the FEIS/ROD balances valid existing gas development lease rights with legitimate social and environmental issues. It also sets the stage for the long-term goal of returning the area to a natural condition. Under the direction of the LRMP, the program approach would include comprehensive implementation, monitoring, mitigation, and reclamation plans for all phases of project development that address gas seepage, water quality/quantity, landslides, wildlife, vegetation, recreation, transportation, visual resources, noise, health and safety, air quality issues, and the minimization of impacts to the CRA.

In addition, a CRMP will be developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties. The CRMP will provide a framework in which to address cumulative impacts to cultural resources and will provide strategies for proactive management of cultural resources within the Northern San Juan Basin area of potential effects (which includes the HD Mountains area).

In addition, hazardous fuels reduction projects will continue to prioritize the WUI-related to SJNF/private land boundaries.

Noxious weeds are managed cooperatively with the State of Colorado (especially in relation to impacts to the Little Squaw Creek drainage).

Primary Values and Important Characteristics

Roadless Area: The HD Mountains area includes the 25,140-acre HD Mountain CRA. This area is important for recreational opportunities, pristine and primitive conditions, wildlife habitat, and roadless values (including those described above). The roadless area may also take pressure off of the more heavily used wilderness areas and WSAs within the planning area by providing solitude and quiet, as well as dispersed recreation opportunities.

Wildlife Habitat: The HD Mountains area, and the associated CRA, represent important, unfragmented wildlife habitat. They also provide connectivity to other important wildlife habitats. The combination of elevation, exposures, and vegetation also means that much of the area is winter range. In addition, important migration corridors for big game and other migrating wildlife are present in the area. The relatively unique occurrence of oak brush on north-facing slopes in the HD Mountains adds to the importance of the area as bear habitat.

Archeological Resources: The HD Mountains area contains important archeological resources (including the Spring Creek, Sauls Creek, Armstrong-Ritter, Turkey Creek, and Peterson Gulch Proposed National Register Districts, and other archeological sites) resources offering unique information and values. These sites and districts may provide information related to Chimney Rock, neighboring populations in the lower San Juan Basin (including Gobernador Valley and Chaco Canyon), and settlements to the west (including Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National

Monument). They may also provide important clues about chronology and settlement patterns, relationships with temporally parallel neighboring populations, and resource utilization across the HD Mountains area landscape.

Geology and Geomorphology: The HD Mountains area is noteworthy for its geology, topography, and landslides. It also contains many areas of steep, unstable, erosive soils and slopes, as well as the Fruitland Formation, which is one of the most productive formations for natural gas in the San Juan Basin. The Fruitland Formation is exposed at the surface in the HD Mountains area, in a feature known locally as the Outcrop. The Outcrop is an important hydrogeologic feature connected to the Fruitland Formation coalbed methane gas reservoir and freshwater aquifer.

Surface Water and Groundwater Resources: Due to the area's dry climate and the unique hydrogeology of the Fruitland Formation, surface water and groundwater are critical resources in the area. There are important water resources connected to the Fruitland Formation, and freshwater springs are present in the core area of the HD Mountains area.

Vegetation: The HD Mountains support a variable mix of vegetation types, ranging from sagebrush to cool-moist mixed conifer forests. Old growth ponderosa pine forests and aspen forests still stand in portions of the HD Mountains area. The stands of old growth ponderosa pine in the HD Mountains area are particularly important (because this is a rare resource in the planning area). In addition, *Townsendia globella* and the riparian natural plant communities of boxelder-narrowleaf cottonwood/red osier dogwood forest, strapleaf willow shrubland, and narrowleaf cottonwood-rocky mountain juniper forest are also important vegetation types of the HD Mountains.

Social and Economic Values: The existing and potential natural gas resources in the HD Mountains area have significant direct and indirect economic benefits for the local and regional area related to gas-field development. The area also provides important social and economic value to the local area (including motorized and non-motorized recreation, primitive solitude, hunting, enjoyment of scenic vistas, and benefits related to gas-field revenues and taxes). Examples of these values include low residential property taxes, as well as new or improved city and county facilities, services, and infrastructure.

Recreation: Recreational opportunities in the HD Mountains area include wide open vistas, as well as views of Chimney Rock, the Piedra River valley (to the east), and the Pine River valley (to the west). The core roadless area provides opportunities for hiking, hunting, and horseback riding in an environment of natural sights and sounds. There are motorized trails on the western and eastern flanks of the HD Mountains.

Livestock Grazing: Livestock grazing is an important use of the HD Mountains area (which has several active allotments that would continue to be used). This use is not expected to increase or decrease significantly in the future.

Fire and Fuels Management: Fire and fuels management are important activities in the HD Mountains area. These management activities would be aimed at reducing fire risk to private lands and residences along the flanks of the core area, as well as improving the overall health of the lands within the planning area and restoring a more natural condition.

Desired Conditions

- 3.25.1 Specific actions for cultural resources are protected, preserved, and interpreted as directed in the Northern San Juan Basin CRMP.
- 3.25.2 High-priority historic and prehistoric resources are stabilized and preserved for future generations.
- 3.25.3 The Spring Creek, Sauls Creek, Armstrong-Ritter, Turkey Creek, and Peterson Gulch National Register Districts/Proposed National Register Districts are maintained in an undisturbed condition and protected from impacts (including from vandalism, visual intrusion, surface disturbances, and erosion).

- 3.25.4 Motorized travel occurs on designated motorized roads and trails within the boundaries of the Spring Creek, Sauls Creek, Armstrong-Ritter, Turkey Creek, and Peterson Gulch National Register Districts/Proposed National Register Districts.
- 3.25.5 Scenic integrity meets an overall moderate scenic integrity objective, and areas of high scenic integrity are maintained, wherever practicable.
- 3.25.6 Although private land and mineral access may be authorized, as appropriate, opportunities to protect private and other key resources is sought through cooperative efforts with local, state, tribal, and other federal agencies.
- 3.25.7 Coordination between local, state, tribal, and other federal agencies is effective and ongoing (especially regarding the integration of management for the San Juan Basin gas field).
- 3.25.8 Water quality is maintained at current, or improved, conditions. Water quantity is maintained at current levels, unless affected by natural factors (including drought).
- 3.25.9 In general, management activities maintain or improve roadless area values, wherever practicable, with a long-term goal of returning the landscape to an unroaded condition. Existing roads in areas such as Spring Creek, Sauls Creek, Turkey Creek, Goose Creek, Lange Canyon, Fosset Gulch, and the Relay Tower Road, as well as motorized trails proposed under the Northern San Juan Basin FEIS/ROD Travel Management Plan (USFS and BLM 2007) remain open to motorized travel indefinitely.
- 3.25.10 Development practices allow for efficient extraction of fluid mineral resources in order to maximize recovery and related economic benefits (including property tax base and other indirect social and economic benefits to the local and regional area).
- 3.25.11 Mineral resources are developed so that the area can be returned to a relatively natural setting as production phases out.
- 3.25.12 Existing mineral leases are reasonably developed using the minimum size and amount of facilities necessary. Future mineral leases are issued with NSO stipulations.
- 3.25.13 Facilities are designed and constructed with the goal of ultimately reclaiming them to closely resemble pre-construction conditions.
- 3.25.14 Facilities are located in order to minimize or avoid construction in steep, erosive, unstable, highly visible, and/or other critical resource areas (including water influence zones, areas with low potential for revegetation, and areas of known habitat for sensitive, threatened or endangered plant and animal species).
- 3.25.15 Where facilities are required, they are collocated, to the extent practicable, in order to reduce overall disturbance and indirect impacts (e.g., vehicle trips, air quality impacts, etc.).
- 3.25.16 Reclamation plans are an integral component of management activities.
- 3.25.17 Natural resources unique to the area (including old growth ponderosa pine forests, wildlife habitat, and water sources) are effectively protected and managed in conjunction with other actions.
- 3.25.18 Wildlife habitat effectiveness and connectivity is maintained.
- 3.25.19 Wildlife habitat and big game winter range are protected, enhanced, or replaced.
- 3.25.20 Management activities avoid disturbance to old growth vegetation. Prescribed fire may be used in old growth vegetation areas after site-specific field review and documentation of analysis and affirmative decision is completed.

- 3.25.21 Forest health, restoration, and fuels management are routine and recurring management activities (especially along the flanks of the HD Mountains). Forest ecosystem health is consistent with minimally disturbed natural systems. Fire-return intervals and risks of catastrophic fire are consistent with the range of natural variability for the various forest communities. Stand structures and vegetative compositions are representative of more natural conditions.
- 3.25.22 Forest health, restoration, and fuels projects are completed in order to reduce fire risk to private lands and residences along the flanks of the HD Mountains, with an overall goal of improving forest health while, at the same time, maintaining and/or returning the area to a more natural forested condition.
- 3.25.23 Invasive plant species (including noxious weeds) are absent or rare in the HD Mountains area.
- 3.25.24 Management activities complement primitive recreation and roadless values.
- 3.25.25 Livestock grazing management complements roadless values and natural forest conditions.
- 3.25.26 Motorized travel occurs on designated roads and trails during appropriate times. Mineral development roads authorized by the Northern San Juan Basin FEIS/ROD are closed year-round to public motorized use (see the Northern San Juan Basin FEIS/ROD for travel management direction.)
- 3.25.27 Air quality impacts from management activities are reduced or avoided using BMPs and the best available technology.

Objectives

- 3.25.28 Every 5 years, unless otherwise determined by the Authorized Officer, complete elk and deer habitat enhancement project(s) (to be completed by operators conducting oil and gas activities in the HD Mountains area). The project(s) must enhance acreage in elk habitat or deer winter range in the HD Mountains area (preferably on state and/or SJNF-administered lands) in an amount that is equal to, or greater than, the acreage disturbed in elk habitat or deer winter range by oil and gas activities in the area.
- 3.25.29 Permanently close all roads that are not designated as open in the Travel Management Plan (roads not used by industry to access coalbed methane sites and not used for administrative purposes). Measures would be taken in order to effectively close such roads to all motorized use (including to full-size vehicles, ATVs, motorcycles, OHVs, and snowmobiles). Measures would include, but are not limited to, blocking roads at least one site distance up the roadbed by placing large boulders, livestock gates, and/or earthen barriers interspersed with tree trunks and branches or obliterating and recontouring areas back to the original slope.
- 3.25.30 Every 5 years, stabilize, rehabilitate, or restore 1 mile or more of gullied channels in order to reduce erosion and sediment delivery.
- 3.25.31 Annually, treat the full length of Crowbar Creek and Sauls Creek in order to control noxious weeds (primarily musk thistle [*Carduus nutans*]) with funds provided by the USFS and/or BLM and/or obtained through collection agreements/other funding instruments executed with oil and gas permittees.
- 3.25.32 Twice per year, treat Spring Creek, Salt Canyon and Fosset Gulch in order to control noxious weeds (primarily musk thistle) with funds provided by the USFS and/or BLM and/or obtained through collection agreements/other funding instruments executed with oil and gas permittees.

Table 3.25.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the HD Mountains MA 2.

Table 3.25.1: HD Mountains Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (treatments generally would not be allowable in the core roadless area)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (to minimize impacts; should utilize existing corridors and disturbed areas where practicable)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (facilities would not be allowed within the roadless area and would generally be limited throughout the entire area)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (summer motorized travel is suitable and may occur on designated routes; seasonal motorized restrictions may apply in order to protect resources and wildlife habitat areas)
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (road development would be limited to lease contract obligations and for restoration management, as necessary)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU or TL stipulations may apply)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

3.26 McPhee (San Juan National Forest)

The McPhee area includes the Anasazi National Register Archeological District and McPhee Dam (see Figure 3.27.2). With over 997 archeological sites, the Anasazi National Register Archeological District contains one of the densest concentrations of Ancestral Puebloan sites in the southwestern United States. These sites were identified and documented during the Dolores Archeological Project. In 1977, the district was established in recognition of this unique concentration of nationally significant cultural resources and landscapes. These sites are associated with Basketmaker III (A.D. 500–750), Pueblo I (A.D. 750–900), and Pueblo II (A.D. 900–1150) culture periods. Rising and falling water levels associated with management of McPhee Reservoir continue to impacts these sites causing erosion, loss of archaeological resources, and NAGPRA issues.

McPhee Dam was constructed on the Dolores River in order to provide storage for irrigation and municipal and industrial water in southwest Colorado. McPhee Reservoir also provides outstanding recreation opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, and ATV use.

The McPhee area also includes the McPhee Reservoir Sauropod Locality. The sauropod is an important dinosaur fossil that will be protected and preserved as required by the PRPA. This significant fossil is currently being managed by the USFS in partnership with Colorado Mesa University. See Section 2.17 Paleontological Resources, for specific desired conditions for the McPhee Reservoir Sauropod Locality.

Under the direction of the LRMP, management of the McPhee area emphasizes protection and preservation of archeological and paleontological sites, while at the same time providing recreation opportunities and protecting big game winter range and sage-grouse habitat. Focused management will address the intensive recreational use of the area, as well as the ongoing impacts to significant archeological and paleontological resources. An integrated archeological, recreation, and interpretive plan should be developed. The existing archaeological monitoring plan will be implemented in order to improve management and to protect archeological resources in the area. A proactive management approach will take full advantage of the educational, interpretive, scientific, and research opportunities available within the area. These proactive approaches include interpretive trails, "Passport In Time" projects, campground programs, and "Archaeology Month" programs. In order to improve management, archeological testing will be conducted on sites that are 100% surface collected in order to determine if subsurface deposits exist. This information can be used to determine future management and uses of these sites. Archeological sites could also be assessed in the waterline in order to ascertain impacts associated with fluctuations in reservoir levels. Data recovery will be conducted, if necessary, in order to mitigate adverse impacts.

Desired Conditions

- 3.26.1 McPhee offers diverse recreation for communities while, at the same time, preserving archeological and paleontological resources.
- 3.26.2 McPhee provides big game winter range and sharp-tailed (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*) and sage-grouse habitat.
- 3.26.3 Vegetation is managed in order to protect and enhance cultural and paleontological resources.
- 3.26.4 Interpretive and educational opportunities enhance visitor experience and increase stewardship of sites.
- 3.26.5 User-made trails are rerouted or eliminated in order to avoid impacts to archeological and paleontological sites.
- 3.26.6 Hazardous fuels are managed in order to protect and preserve archeological resources, and to reduce the risk of wildfire to recreational facilities.
- 3.26.7 Cultural viewsheds are preserved; incompatible uses or developments are prevented.
- 3.26.8 The SJNF partners with the Bureau of Reclamation to address impacts to archaeological resources and NAGPRA issues.
- 3.26.9 The SJNF partners with research organizations to test archaeological sites and conduct data recovery if sites are being impacted.

Objectives

- 3.26.10 Within 5 years, implement site-steward and "adopt-a-site" programs.
- 3.26.11 Over the implementation life of the LRMP, develop two interpretive trails.
- 3.26.12 Within 10 years, test two sites for subsurface archeological deposits.
- 3.26.13 Within 5 years, implement archaeological monitoring plan.
- 3.26.14 Within 3 years, reroute or close user-made trails that are impacting archaeological resources

Table 3.26.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the McPhee.

Table 3.26.1: McPhee Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Restricted
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted (significant archaeological resources must be protected)
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Restricted (to minimize impacts to archaeological resources; utilize existing corridors where practicable)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted to existing facilities (significant archaeological resources must be protected prior to the development of any new facilities)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated routes
Motorized (winter)	Restricted
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted
Mechanical transport	Restricted to designated roads and trails
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Administratively not available
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted

3.27 Rico (San Juan National Forest)

The Rico “special area” includes the USFS-administered lands adjacent to the town of Rico. Approximate boundaries include Telescope Mountain to the northeast, Spruce Gulch to the southeast, Burnett Creek to the southwest, and Horse Creek to the northwest. The Rico area is located in a subalpine region of the San Juan Mountains, with elevations ranging from 8,800 feet in town to 12,681 feet on nearby Blackhawk Mountain. The area’s climate is best described as having four distinct seasons with significant winter snows, as well as the associated springtime runoffs. The large volumes of water from the winter snowmelt support a vast conifer and aspen forest with interspersed meadows. The high altitude and southerly latitude of the Rico area offer diverse and sometimes extreme climatic conditions that can range from warm and pleasant sunny days in the middle of January to harsh snowstorms in the summer months. Due to the high altitude, significant temperature drops usually occur at night. Snowstorm events can be substantial, and it is not unusual for roads to be closed, power to be disrupted, and/or emergency services to be delayed.

The Rico area is located primarily on the east side of the Dolores River (which is fed by several tributaries). The headwaters of these tributaries begin in the cirques and basins formed by the numerous surrounding mountain peaks. The majority of these peaks (including Expectation, Dolores, and Telescope) have elevations of over 12,000 feet. The area supports an array of big game wildlife (including deer, elk, sheep, mountain lion [*Puma concolor*], and black bear [*Ursus americanus*]). Elk and deer are primary resources. Small game is also plentiful (including blue grouse [*Dendragapus obscurus*] and snowshoe hare). The Dolores River, Silver Creek, and many other local tributaries, support a diverse plant and wildlife ecosystem. Canada lynx have recently been reintroduced into the SJNF and are often seen in the area.

The historic mining industry in the Rico area has provided a rich cultural history and is the reason the town was founded; however, it has also left behind a legacy of environmental damage. Impacts are primarily from previous mining activities (including mill tailings, mine dumps, shafts and tunnels, water quality degradation, and lead contamination to some of the area's soils). Hundreds of active unpatented mining claims continue to surround the Rico area.

The town of Rico is relatively remote. The nearest towns to the north are Telluride and Mountain Village (which are approximately 28 miles away, over Lizard Head Pass). The nearest towns to the south are Dolores (approximately 40 miles away) and Cortez (approximately 50 miles away).

Rico is a community that aims to preserve its small mountain town historic character, even as the population grows. The community uses the natural resources of the surrounding public lands in order to assist in building a new post-mining economy. The relatively undeveloped, non-resort character of Rico is rapidly becoming rare in Colorado (as it is in other western states). Preserving the feel and appearance of the historic compact "mountain town" land pattern of the existing town is extremely important to the residents and property owners of Rico. New development areas beyond the historic town plat will complement the existing town site by focusing development adjacent to town on the north and south sides while, at the same time, preserving natural forest areas to the east and west of town. Management of population growth, new development, and overall rate of growth are essential to preserving the unique character and relationship between the USFS/BLM and the Rico community (USFS and Town of Rico, Colorado 2011).

Under the direction of the LRMP, focused management of this area will address the impacts that occur in tandem with private land development and the maintenance of the interconnected SJNF resources. A sustainable management approach that maintains the close relationship between the people of Rico and the landscape of public lands will allow these goals to be met.

The Rico special area would offer an opportunity for the SJNF to work collaboratively with the people of Rico in order to develop sustainable management practices for the planning area. SJNF managers will develop an MOU for projects in the Rico area in order to outline common goals and achieve sustainable management approaches throughout the implementation life of the LRMP.

Desired Conditions

- 3.27.1 Management of SJNF-administered lands contributes to or enhances the historic "mountain town" scale and appearance of the Rico.
- 3.27.2 Trailheads and informational signage direct locals and visitors to the appropriate desired recreational experience.
- 3.27.3 Land ownership patterns are improved and consolidated between the town, private landowners, and the SJNF in order to enhance community development objectives and to reduce resource impacts (including to the viewshed on the surrounding public lands).
- 3.27.4 Trails accessing SJNF-administered lands from within town boundaries emphasize non-motorized recreation modes in order to emphasize the community's quiet-use character.
- 3.27.5 Restoration and preservation of the natural space, beauty, and terrain of the area is recognized as the principal resource asset to the town.
- 3.27.6 Undeveloped areas and CRAs on SJNF-administered lands near and/or around Rico provide quality elk and other large game habitat and wildlife corridors. These areas also provide quality hunting and wildlife viewing, as well as pristine backcountry non-motorized recreational experiences.

- 3.27.7 Undeveloped and roadless areas on SJNF-administered lands near and/or around Rico continue to provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to the sustainable reintroduction of the Canada lynx.
- 3.27.8 Select historic structures associated with the area's past mining history are stabilized, protected, and interpreted.
- 3.27.9 Area residents, as well as the visiting public, are directed to appropriate areas for non-motorized and motorized recreation opportunities through a variety of informational, educational, and interpretational venues.
- 3.27.10 Instream flows on the upper Dolores River above McPhee Reservoir are maintained in order to enhance and preserve the scenic quality of the Dolores River (and the surrounding watershed) and protect fisheries, riparian, and aquatic habitat.
- 3.27.11 The watersheds surrounding Rico are maintained and enhanced, with a focus on water quality improvement for perennial streams entering the Dolores River.
- 3.27.12 Water quality entering the Dolores River is improved due to collaborative remediation efforts to clean up mining-impacted lands in the Rico area.
- 3.27.13 The Silver Creek watershed remains the municipal water source for the town of Rico until such time as additional and/or new water sources are developed. Rico's municipal water supply source is protected from development activities that would cause negative impacts, per the town's permitting process and in coordination with the SJNF.

Objectives

- 3.27.14 Emphasize a proactive working relationship between the town of Rico and the SJNF that serves to preserve and protect the uniqueness of the Rico community. Annual meetings between the town and the SJNF will be encouraged in order to review community and public land management objectives specific to the public lands within the Rico MA 2 area.
- 3.27.15 Within 5 years, develop a parking lot outside the town limits for the Burnett Trailhead in order to provide an adequate staging area for motorized recreational experiences, along with preserving the quiet of the community while, at the same time, providing motorized opportunities.
- 3.27.16 Annually, sign a minimum of one trail within the Rico area in order to inform and direct appropriate recreation use.

Suitability

Table 3.27.1 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Rico area.

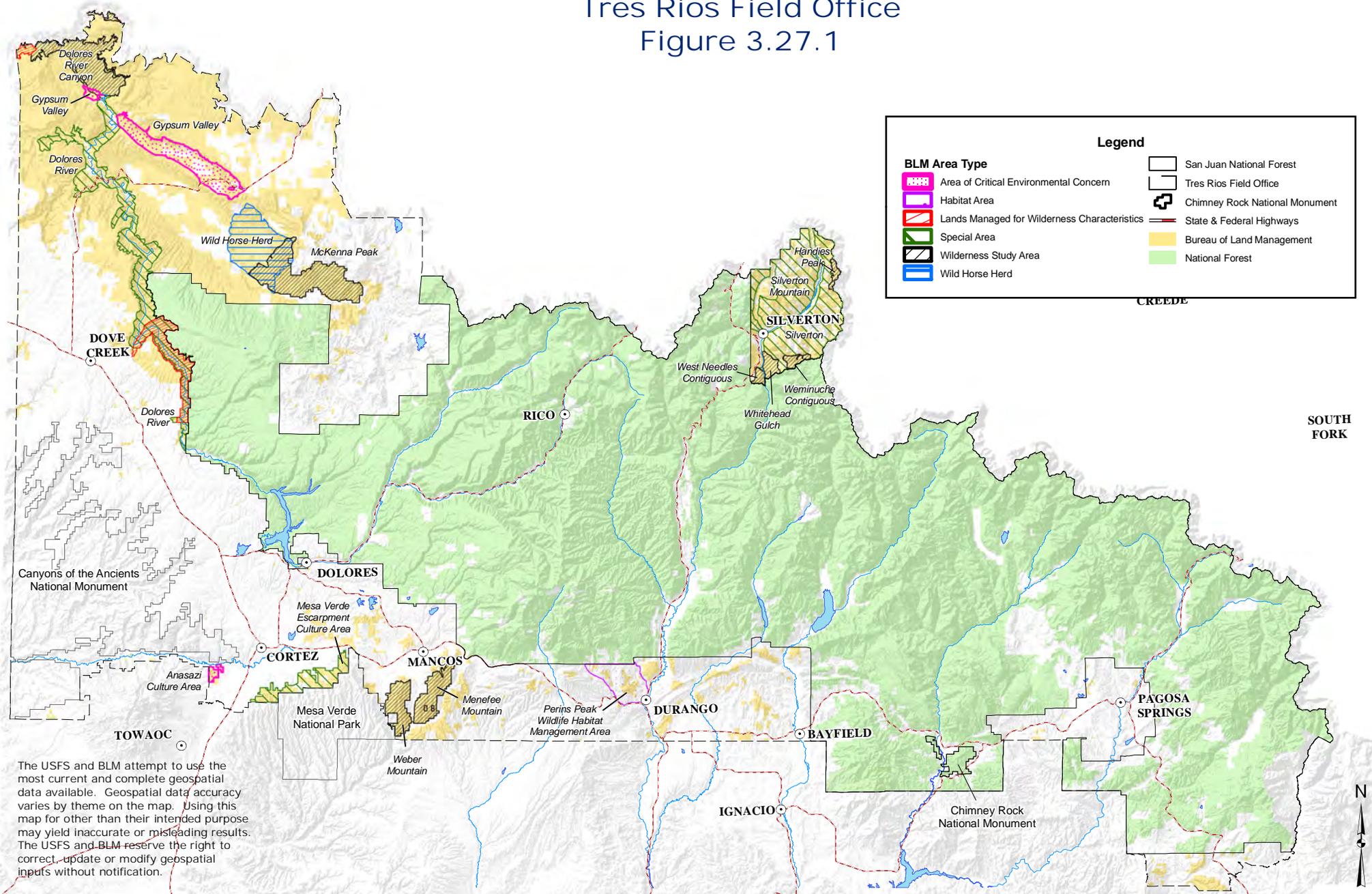
Table 3.27.1: Rico Area Allowable Uses

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Restricted to mitigating natural disturbances (including insect or disease epidemics) and preventing adverse impacts to the surrounding viewshed, watershed, and overall land health
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to mitigating natural disturbances (including insect or disease epidemics) and preventing adverse impacts to the surrounding viewshed, watershed, and overall land health
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Allowable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Allowable
Land use ROWs, special use permits, and utility corridors	Allowable
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (facilities such as parking areas, staging areas, and adequate signage, are generally suitable to direct and inform recreation activities)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to motorized routes and trails designated within the Rico area
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to motorized areas designated within the Rico area
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanical transport	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (permitted in order to provide access to valid existing rights, including mining claims; temporary construction may occur in some areas in order to achieve resource restoration objectives)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (an NSO stipulation would be applied to CRAs within the Rico area; CSU and TL stipulations may be applied to specific locations, as necessary, in order to mitigate resource impacts)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry per the 1872 Mining Law; however, the exploration and development of mining claims may be subject to restrictions to protect resources)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (limited road access and other constraints in the Rico area may limit or preclude mineral development)

Special Areas and Designations

Tres Rios Field Office

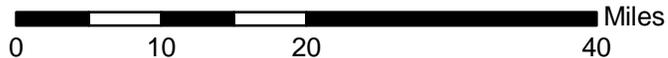
Figure 3.27.1



Legend	
BLM Area Type	
Area of Critical Environmental Concern	San Juan National Forest
Habitat Area	Tres Rios Field Office
Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics	Chimney Rock National Monument
Special Area	State & Federal Highways
Wilderness Study Area	Bureau of Land Management
Wild Horse Herd	National Forest

The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

MDR
 NAD 83, Polyconic Projection
 August 20, 2013

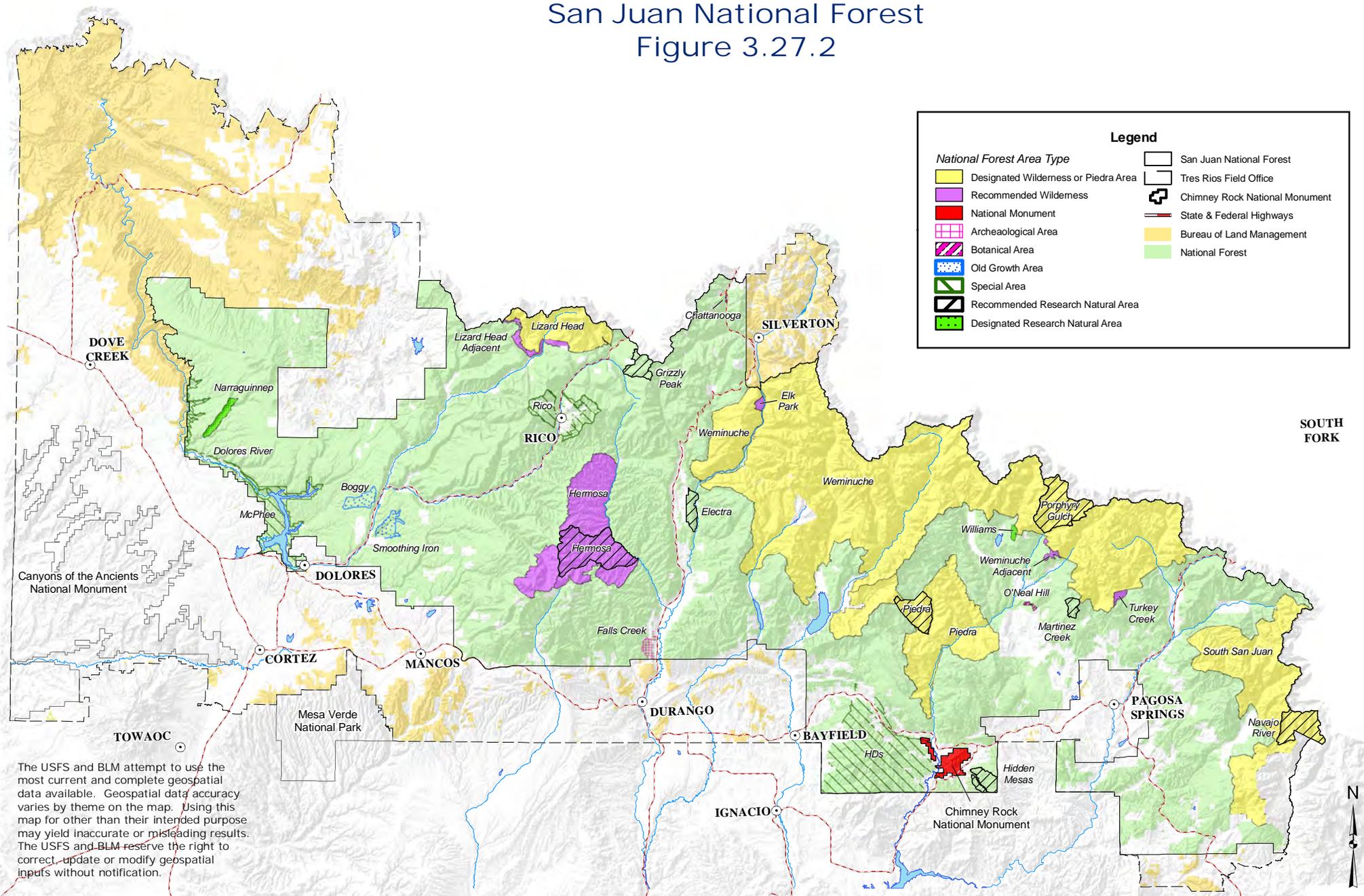


San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office
 Land and Resource Management Plan

Special Areas and Designations

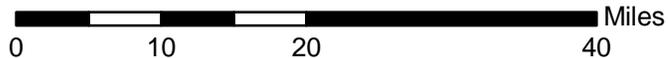
San Juan National Forest

Figure 3.27.2



The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

MDR
 NAD 83, Polyconic Projection
 August 19, 2013



San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office
 Land and Resource Management Plan