

MGT AREA 18 – WILD & SCENIC RIVER

A VISION

Manage under the BLM Wild River Management Plan.

This looks into the future, although some of it may be happening now. It is stated in the "present tenses" as if it is already that way. This gives a feel of where we are heading. It paints a general picture with a broad brush.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

- Manage under the BLM Wild River Management Plan.

This table snaps a more detailed picture of what this management area will look like in the future. Since much depends on natural cycles, which need time, these conditions may take many years to achieve. Some of it may be in this condition now.

DESCRIPTION

This area includes that portion of the Questa District which was classified under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The entire length of the Rio Grande along the Carson National Forest boundary, a distance of approximately five miles, and the lower 3.25 miles of the Red River along the Forest boundary are classified, designated, and administered as part of a Wild River. The upper portion of this area on Red River is classified, designated, and administered as part of a recreational river. This portion is .75 miles long, including .25 miles which crosses private land.

Both of these rivers flow through deep gorges and the view is spectacular from any vantage point on the gorge rim.

Water quality is acceptable under standards established by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The rivers contain trout, and raptors are common in the canyons.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to administer the entire designated area. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) produced the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Recreation Area Management Plan in 1983. This plan is available in the BLM office in Taos, NM.

Standards and Guidelines

This section contains the standards and guidelines against which activities and uses are to be compared. It focuses on and provides more details about the "Desired Future Conditions." In some cases it gives the long term "where and when." The Forest Plan Implementation Schedule is the tool used for all short-term planning and scheduling. The Implementation Schedule provides the operational perspective [making the commitment – asking for the dollars and scheduling what year it will be done in.] The tactical perspective [the execution] is the actual implementation on the ground. This is done after we get the funding. It is also documented as accomplishments in the Forest Plan Implementation Schedule.

Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River

- Manage under the BLM Wild River Management Plan.

Wild Rivers [FSH 1909.12, 8.2]

- *Timber Production: Cutting of trees will not be permitted except when needed in association with a primitive recreation experience (such as clearing for trails and protection of users) or to protect the environment (such as control of fire). Timber outside the boundary but within the visual corridors, will be managed and harvested in a manner to provide special emphasis to visual quality.*
- *Water Supply: All water supply dams and major diversions are prohibited.*
- *Hydroelectric Power: No development of hydroelectric power facilities would be permitted.*
- *Flood Control: No flood control dams, levees, or other works are allowed in the channel or river corridor. The natural appearance and essentially primitive character of the river area must be maintained.*
- *Mining: New mining claims and mineral leases are prohibited within 1/4 mile of the river. Valid claims would not be abrogated. Subject to regulations (36 CFR 228) that the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior may prescribe to protect the rivers included in the National System, other existing mining activity would be allowed to continue. Existing mineral activity must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation, and visual impairment. Reasonable access will be permitted.*
- *Road Construction: No roads or other provisions for overland motorized travel would be permitted within a narrow incised river valley or, if the river valley is broad, within 1/4 mile of the river bank. A few inconspicuous roads leading to the boundary of the river area at the time of study will not disqualify wild river classification. Also, unobtrusive trail bridges could be allowed.*
- *Agriculture: Agricultural use is restricted to a limited amount of domestic livestock grazing and hay production to the extent currently practiced. Row crops are prohibited.*
- *Recreation Development: Major public-use areas, such as large campgrounds, interpretive centers, or administrative headquarters are located outside the wild river area. Simple comfort and convenience facilities, such as fireplaces or shelters may be provided as necessary within the river area. These should harmonize with the surroundings.*
- *Structure: A few minor existing structures could be allowed assuming such structures are not incompatible with the essentially primitive and natural values of the viewshed. New structures would not be allowed except in rare instances to achieve management objectives (i.e. structures and activities associated with fisheries enhancement programs could be allowed).*
- *Utilities: New transmission lines, gas lines, water lines, etc. are discouraged. Where no reasonable alternative exists, additional or new facilities should be restricted to existing rights-of-way. Where new rights-of-way are indicated, the scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife values must be evaluated in the selection of the site.*
- *Motorized travel: Motorized travel on land or water could be permitted, but is generally not compatible with this classification.*

Scenic Rivers [FSH 1909.12, 8.2]

- *Timber Production: A wide range of silvicultural practices could be allowed provided that such practices are carried on in such a way that there is no substantial adverse effect on the river and its*

immediate environment. The river area should be maintained in its near natural environment. Timber outside the boundary but within the visual scene area should be managed and harvested in a manner which provides special emphasis on visual quality.

- *Water Supply: All water supply dams and major diversions are prohibited.*
- *Hydroelectric Power: No development of hydroelectric power facilities would be allowed.*
- *Flood Control: Flood control dams and levees would be prohibited.*
- *Mining: Subject to regulations at 36 CFR 228 that the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior may prescribe to protect the values of rivers included in the National System, new mining claims and mineral leases could be allowed and existing operations allowed to continue. However, mineral activity must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation and pollution, and visual impairment.*
- *Road Construction: Roads may occasionally bridge the river area and short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous and well-screened roads or screened railroads could be allowed. Consideration will be given to the type of use for which roads are constructed and the type of use that will occur in the river area.*
- *Agriculture: A wider range of agricultural uses is permitted to the extent currently practiced. Row crops are not considered as an intrusion of the "largely primitive" nature of scenic corridors as long as there is not a substantial adverse effect on the natural-like appearance of the river area.*
- *Recreation Development: Larger scale public use facilities, such as moderate size campgrounds, public information centers, and administrative headquarters are allowed if such structures are screened from the river. Modest and unobtrusive marinas also can be allowed.*
- *Structures: Any concentrations of habitations are limited to relatively short reaches of the river corridor. New structures that would have a direct and adverse effect on river values would not be allowed.*
- *Utilities: This is the same as for wild river classifications.*
- *Motorized Travel: Motorized travel on land or water may be permitted, prohibited or restricted to protect the river values.*

Recreational Rivers [FSH 1909.12,8.2]

- *Timber Production: Timber harvesting would be allowed under standard restrictions to protect the immediate river environment, water quality, scenic, fish and wildlife, and other values.*
- *Water Supply: Existing low dams, diversion works, rip rap and other minor structures are allowed provided the waterway remains generally natural in appearance.*
- *New structures are prohibited.*
- *Hydroelectric Power: No development of hydroelectric power facilities is allowed.*
- *Flood Control: Existing flood control works may be maintained. New structures are prohibited.*
- *Mining: Subject to regulations (36 CFR 228) that the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior may prescribe to protect values of rivers included in the National System, new mining claims and mineral leases are allowed and existing operations are allowed to continue. Mineral activity must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation and pollution, and visual impairment.*
- *Road Construction: Paralleling roads or railroads could be constructed on one or both riverbanks. There can be several bridge crossings and numerous river access points.*
- *Agriculture: Lands may be managed for a full range of agricultural uses, to the extent currently practiced.*
- *Recreation Development: Campgrounds and picnic areas may be established in close proximity to the river. However, recreational classification does not require extensive recreation development.*
- *Structures: Small Communities as well as dispersed or cluster residential developments are allowed. New structures are allowed for both habitation and for intensive recreation use.*
- *Utilities: This is the same as for wild and scenic river classifications.*
- *Motorized Travel: Motorized travel on land or water may be permitted, prohibited or restricted. Controls will usually be similar to surrounding lands and waters.*