

Appendix 2. Updated Forest Plan Direction for the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness Research Natural Area

The following excerpts outline the Forestwide goals and objectives, and Management Area-specific standards and guidelines of the 2006 Forest Plan that reference the Research Natural Area (RNA) located within the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness. These excerpts have been modified to remove mention of the 'candidate' status for this RNA. Formal designation of this RNA was authorized by the Regional Forester on December 7, 2012. The original Forest Plan direction is located on our website (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ottawa/forestplan>; pp. 2-11 and 3-42 to 3-43) or is available upon request (see the Cover Letter for contact information).

Forestwide Goals and Objectives, (Forest Plan, p. 2-11)

4060 Research Natural Areas

38. Provide quality examples of dominant vegetation types and special features that occur on National Forest System lands through the reference area network for the Ottawa to furnish valuable ecological information to the Forest Service and society. Reference areas include established research natural areas (RNAs), candidate RNAs, as well as RNA-equivalents.

Objective(s):

a) Maintain these areas in their natural states, including natural disturbance processes, to continue to be representative of the ecosystems they were established to represent.

Management Area 5.2 – Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness (Forest Plan, pp. 3-42 and 3-43)

Area Description

The Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness is located on the Kenton and Ontonagon Ranger Districts (managed by the Kenton Ranger District) in Baraga and Houghton Counties. The management area encompasses approximately 14,500 acres as cited in the 1987 Michigan Wilderness Act. A Research Natural Area (RNA) has been established within the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness. The area is about 351 acres. The airshed of the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness is designated as Class II.

Research Natural Areas

Standards

In Research Natural Areas (RNAs), ecological processes prevail with minimum human intervention. Management emphasizes conserving or enhancing the resources and ecosystem features for which the RNA was selected, and activities which detract from these values and features are prohibited.

Prohibit the use of horses in RNAs.

Guidelines

Avoid activities which diminish the eligibility of the area for research. Activities that would enhance a RNA's eligibility for research, such as a land ownership adjustment, may be undertaken after careful review of project design and probable impacts.

Avoid recreational use that threatens or interferes with the purposes for which the RNA may be established. These areas may be closed to public use when needed to protect botanical or other attributes from disturbances.

Allow control actions for non-native invasive species to protect adjacent resources or the features for which the RNA was selected.

For all significant data collections, the locations, collectors, methods, and dates are known and the unanalyzed data are available. Copies of all data, reports, and publications resulting from studies in the area, including theses, dissertations, articles, monographs, etc., are provided to the Ottawa.

Utilize the Eastern Region RNA user permit process for all research activity proposals.