

**METADATA**  
**Research Natural Areas**  
**(ResearchNaturalAreas)**

**Summary (Purpose):** This dataset contains the established and proposed Research Natural Areas (RNA) that have been designated within the Bitterroot National Forest. The purpose of the data is to provide display, identification, and analysis tools for determining current boundary information for Forest Service managers, GIS Specialists, and others.

**Description (Abstract):** The Forest Service RNA system was initiated in 1927 with the establishment of the Santa Catalina RNA on the Coronado National Forest in Arizona. In 1977, "A Directory of Research Natural Areas on Federal Lands of the United States" was published and describes an established network of 389 areas encompassing over 4 million acres of federal lands in 46 states and one territory. At this time, 122 of these RNAs were on National Forest System land. Today, the network of Forest Service RNAs has grown to over 430 areas and 500,000 acres.

The overall goal of RNA management is to maintain the full suite of ecological processes associated with the natural communities and conditions for which the RNA was designed to protect. Attention is being placed on restoration of natural processes such as fire, and control of invasive alien species which alter the composition and functioning of natural communities.

Boundary information is maintained by the national Automated Lands Program (ALP). ALP is an information management program with the mission to digitally track all Forest Service land status and survey management data.

**Attributes:**

**Region:** Forest Service Region in which the RNA exists (01=Northern Region).

**AREATYPE:** "RESEARCH NATURAL AREA" OR "PROPOSED RESEARCH NATURAL AREA"

**AREANAME:** Name of the RNA.

**GIS\_Acres:** Size of the RNA, in acres (calculated by ArcMap).

**STATUS\_RNA:** "Established" or "Proposed"

**Coordinate System:**

**Type:** Projected

**Geographic Coordinate Reference:** GCS North American 1983

**Datum:** D\_North\_America\_1983

**Projection:** NAD\_1983\_UTM\_Zone\_11N

**Unit:** Meters

**Use Limitation:** The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy; accurate only at certain scales; based on modeling or interpretation; incomplete while being created or revised; etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created, may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify or replace GIS products without notification.