

3.1 SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

Theme: Special Interest Areas (SIAs) are managed for public education, interpretation, recreation or development while protecting or enhancing areas with unusual characteristics.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

These areas are managed to maintain their special interest values. Typically, SIAs have been designated as botanical, geological, historical, paleontological, scenic, and zoological areas. SIAs can be designated to protect and manage threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and other elements of biological diversity, or for their scenic values, or public popularity. SIAs can vary from small to fairly large areas. In addition, places such as caves, hot springs, cultural resource sites, 14,000-foot peaks, significant views, state-designated historic sites, and potential developed sites could be considered for SIAs.

Vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, soil productivity, and water quality usually, but not always, appear near natural (relatively pristine or presettlement). Maintain or restore the natural (or near-natural) conditions and protect threatened, endangered, or sensitive species habitat and the values for which the SIA was established. Insect and disease losses are generally accepted.

Develop specific management direction in a separate management plan for each SIA to protect the values for which the SIA was developed.

Social

Evidence of human activities or habitation is consistent with the characteristics for which the area was established. Encounters between individuals or parties depend on the objectives for designation. A variety of methods to communicate direction, regulation and information are used in a manner consistent with the characteristics of the area.

Administrative

Facilities are present to the extent needed to maintain the area or to facilitate visitor use. New facilities may be constructed to enhance the values for which the SIA was designated, for interpretive or educational purposes or to correct resource damage.

Acquire inholdings and adjacent parcels if needed to achieve area objectives if development would prevent achievement of area objectives. Retain all real property. Special uses may be allowed if compatible with SIA values.

Standards and Guidelines

1. (ST) Withdraw this area from mineral entry in conformance with Section 204 of Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (PL 94-579) when withdrawal is necessary to protect the values for which the SIA was designated.

Stuck Creek Splash Dam SIA

The area around the dam on Stuck Creek is designated as an SIA because of the dam's historical significance. There are only four known dams remaining from the tie-cutting era in logging history. The dam structure's two towers are still intact, although much of the support structure has deteriorated. The structure is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The surrounding area also contains remains of what is thought to have been a logging hamlet.

Rist Canyon SIA

This area provides habitat for many plant and animal species including neotropical migrant birds, orchids and other species that depend on open space. It is important because it is surrounded by highly developed private lands. Management emphasis is on preserving this unique foothills environment.

Homestead Meadows SIA

The Homestead Meadows area is designated as an SIA because of the historical significance of the old homesites. Management emphasis is on preserving and interpreting the National Register of Historic Places sites within the area's boundaries.

Todd Gulch Fen SIA

This area contains the unusual characteristics typical of quaking fens throughout the Central Rockies biophysical region. Management emphasis is on preserving and enhancing the character of the area.

Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve SIA

The Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve is part of the National "Man-and-the-Biosphere" Project sponsored by the United Nations. Management emphasis is on providing opportunities for ongoing research while providing for compatible recreational uses.

James Peak SIA

The James Peak SIA was designated because it contains unusual opportunities for recreation in an undeveloped area. Management emphasis is on protecting or enhancing the undeveloped character of the area while providing for public education and compatible recreational

opportunities. Natural ecological processes are the principal dynamic forces at work in this area; management activities will be limited to maintaining and restoring the area to conditions characteristic of natural forest ecosystems. Motorized recreational use is prohibited all year.

Arapaho National Recreation Area SIA

This area was Congressionally designated and directed to be administered primarily for public recreation. Management emphasis is on recreation and interpretation with water-based recreation as a key attraction.

Bowen Protection Area SIA

This area was Congressionally designated as the Bowen Gulch Protection Area in 1992 because of its unique blend of historical recreational use and pristine character. Management emphasis is on retaining its pristine nature, while providing opportunities for moderate to heavy winter motorized use and summer use that have occurred historically and are specified in the Bowen Gulch legislation.

Prairie Ecosystem Demonstration Areas SIA

These are actually two areas on the Grassland that are designated for the same reasons and will be managed the same way. Management emphasis is on providing representative native shortgrass prairie ecosystems that provide habitat for associated plant and animal species, to permit trial application of research in the shortgrass, and to emphasize information and education.

Pawnee Buttes SIA

The Pawnee Buttes on the Grassland were designated as an SIA because of the area's unique combination of characteristics. Management emphasis is on protecting and interpreting the special wildlife, recreational, scenic, and geological features.

Grays Peak SIA

The Grays Peak SIA contains two peaks over 14,000 feet tall, Grays Peak and Torreys Peak, that are hiked by thousands of people yearly. Hiking trails in the area include the Grays Peak National Recreation Trail and a portion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Management emphasis is on providing opportunities for a high level of nonmotorized recreational use and protecting the high-quality scenic and recreational values of the area while maintaining important habitat for bighorn sheep and mountain goats.

West Stoneham Archaeological District SIA

This area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Significant evidence of

Native American habitation from 8,500 years ago to the mid 1800s occurs in this shortgrass prairie area of the Pawnee National Grassland. Management emphasis is on protecting and interpreting the nonrenewable heritage resources.

3.21 LIMITED USE

Theme: These are general forest areas managed to insure long-term viability of adjacent cores and corridors by preventing intrusion of exotic species and human disturbance and by providing supplementary habitat. The primary management objectives are to insulate against high-intensity land use and to protect cores and corridors from edge effects, but to allow limited extractive uses.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

Increase or maintain plant communities and structural stages which provide quality foraging areas, cover, and areas of solitude in patterns across the landscape. Provide for a variety of forest and nonforest plant communities and successional stages through predominantly natural processes, but human manipulation may occur. Insect and disease losses are generally accepted. A variety of fire sizes and shapes results from wildland and prescribed fires.

Social

Allow only uses that are consistent with protection of adjacent cores and corridors and that promote maintenance of biological diversity. These should generally be light and of minimal impact. Seasonal restrictions and other controls are noticeable. Motorized vehicles are to be used on roads only (defined for Alternative H only, as greater than 48" and more than one track). Restrict snowmobile use in winter to high-use areas, such as designated groomed trails. Mountain bicycles are restricted to designated travelways. Resolve conflicts with all other uses in favor of maintaining native plant and animal species.

Administrative

Manage the minimum road system, at a density of 1 mile per square mile or less, needed to provide public access and access for management activities and fire protection. Do not encourage increased road use. Discourage road and trail construction; use it primarily for obliteration or relocation of travelways that are causing damage. Acquire inholdings and adjacent parcels as opportunities arise to maintain or increase the integrity of the adjacent cores and corridors. Allow compatible special uses that do not jeopardize the integrity of the adjacent cores and corridors.

Standards and Guidelines

1. (ST) Allow timber operations only in one confined place in each limited-use area at any given time.
2. (ST) Do not permit grazing of domestic livestock in riparian areas.

3. (GL) Manage dispersed site use and occupancy to maintain sites within Frissell condition class 1 through 3 except for designated sites which may be class 4. Close or restore class 5 sites.

3.3 BACKCOUNTRY MOTORIZED RECREATION

Theme: Backcountry, motorized recreational areas are managed to provide recreational opportunities on primitive roads and trails in a natural-appearing landscape.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

A variety of plant communities, structural stages, and associated wildlife occur in patterns maintained primarily through ecological processes. The variety and arrangement depends on the timing of natural disturbances (fire, insects and diseases, and storms) or prescribed fire.

The amount and arrangement of successional stages vary greatly depending on the amount and timing of disturbances and how openings revegetate.

Openings vary in size and are generally the result of the natural disturbances described above. Openings may be utilized to provide scenic views and add to the diversity of the landscape. New human-caused changes to vegetation that may occur are limited in scale and are not visually dominant. For short time periods, some vegetation manipulation may occur which may be noticed; however, it resembles natural patterns.

Social

Provide a variety of motorized recreational opportunities. Unique hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities may exist in these areas that are away from major travelways where seclusion and cover areas exist. Other compatible activities, including nonmotorized recreation, may occur.

Encounters between individuals or parties are common on most travelways. Seasonal restrictions for resource protection may occur. Fewer contacts occur away from travelways. Expect sounds from people or motorized recreational activities near travelways. Sounds from outside the area may be common near the area's edge. Farther away from travelways or the area's edges, sounds diminish into the background.

Use subtle on-site regulations and controls. Restrict motorized travel to designated routes. Limit directional, regulatory and informational signs to those necessary to foster safe use and resource protection. Contacts with Forest Service personnel are generally initiated by visitors, except for contacts necessary to maintain the setting.

Administrative

Limit facilities to those necessary to protect resources, provide for safety, or to enhance recreational experiences. Existing improvements such as primitive roads, trails, bridges, fences,

shelters, signs or water diversions blend into the landscape where feasible or are removed if no longer needed. New travelways may be constructed to enhance motorized recreation, prevent damage to resources, or provide access. Marked travelways provide for a variety of motorized use and challenge levels. Most routes are designed for a variety of motorized vehicle uses and will loop, run point-to-point, or seek to link with other management areas or developed sites.

Acquire inholdings or adjacent lands as opportunities arise to maintain or improve semiprimitive motorized recreational opportunities or to prevent development that would diminish semiprimitive experiences on NFS lands. Retain all NFS lands. Acquire lands or rights-of-way that are needed to meet resource management goals and objectives and enhance access to recreational opportunities. Allow compatible special uses.

Standards and Guidelines

1. **(GL)** Manage dispersed site use and occupancy to maintain sites within Frissell condition class 1 through 3 except for designated sites which may be class 4. Close or restore class 5 sites.

3.5 FORESTED FLORA AND FAUNA HABITATS

Theme: Management emphasis is on providing adequate amounts of quality forage, cover, escape terrain, solitude, breeding habitat, and protection for a wide variety of wildlife species and associated plant communities.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

Provide quality, all-season habitat for wildlife species. Increase or maintain plant communities and structural stages which provide quality foraging areas, cover, and areas of solitude in patterns across the landscape. Provide for a variety of forest and nonforest plant communities and successional stages through a combination of human manipulation and natural processes. Retain all existing lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old growth, except for natural losses that are not human caused, and provide like amounts in the future. Provide for rapid development of future lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old-growth conditions. Protect areas and communities that are providing important habitat components such as wintering areas, birthing areas (especially for calving, fawning, lambing and kidding), rearing areas, and migration routes. Manage and protect healthy forested and nonforested riparian areas to retain their value as quality habitats for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.

Insect and disease losses are generally accepted unless they threaten communities which are providing important habitat components. A variety of fire sizes and shapes result from wildland and prescribed fires. Plant communities with a shrub component are protected from fires and livestock grazing during times when damage to the shrub component occurs.

Schedule and implement management activities including prescribed burning, livestock grazing, timber harvesting, thinning, and travel access management to gain the greatest benefit to wildlife habitat possible.

Disturbances may be fairly evident and the scale may vary from small to large. Design vegetation changes to resemble natural patterns.

Social

Provide dispersed recreational opportunities outside critical periods for wildlife. Restrict recreational use to the extent necessary to protect the values for which the area is designated. Frequent encounters between individuals or parties are acceptable along primary travelways during noncritical times. Discourage motorized recreation away from primary travelways, but allow or provide access to existing areas of high use. Prohibit motorized use in some areas and limit seasonally in others. Allow or restrict snowmobile use on primary travelways on a case-by-case basis. Do not encourage nonmotorized use during critical wildlife periods. Restrictions and controls are noticeable.

Administrative

There are very few developed or designated recreational facilities. Structural and nonstructural range improvements are compatible with wildlife needs. Design new habitat improvements to be minimally intrusive into the landscape and to harmonize with the natural environment. Provide simple information facilities. Directional, regulatory, and informational signs are minimal to foster safe use, identify requirements for use of the area, and to provide route information.

Manage the minimum road system to provide access for management activities, recreational access and fire protection. Road and trail construction activities rarely occur and are primarily for obliteration or relocation of travelways that are causing resource damage.

Acquire inholdings and adjacent parcels to maintain or increase habitat effectiveness or where imminent development would be inconsistent with management area objectives of NFS lands. Retain NFS lands if parcel is being used as winter range or development would decrease habitat effectiveness on the remaining NFS lands, or if it contains key or essential habitat or a unique or critical ecosystem. Dispose of NFS lands if the offered lands provide a net increase in habitat effectiveness in the same area and *one* of the following: (1) the parcel neither meets management area objectives nor other NFS purposes compatible with management area objectives; or (2) its development would not decrease the effectiveness of remaining habitat. Acquire rights-of-way that are needed to meet resource goals and objectives. Allow special uses that do not disrupt wildlife.

Standards and Guidelines

1. **(ST)** Exclude vegetation treatment of inventoried spruce-fir or lodgepole pine old growth.
2. **(ST)** Maintain or increase habitat effectiveness, except where new access is required by law.
3. **(ST)** Discourage or prohibit human activities and travel, where needed, to allow effective habitat use during season of primary use by elk, deer and bighorn sheep (at least the minimum periods of May 15 through June 30 for elk calving, June 1 through June 30 for deer fawning, May 15 through June 30 for bighorn lambing, and December 1 through March 31 for wintering deer, elk and bighorn).
4. **(ST)** Discourage or prohibit human activities and travel, where needed, to allow effective habitat use by other wildlife species, especially during the seasons of birthing and rearing of young.
5. **(ST)** Do not construct new roads except when they contribute to improving habitat or providing legal access. Obliterate any temporary roads within one year following intended use.

6. (ST) Adjust livestock grazing to meet wildlife habitat objectives.
7. (GL) Allow, through vegetation protection, or encourage, through vegetation treatments, the development of future lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old-growth conditions.

3.55 CORRIDORS CONNECTING CORE AREAS

Theme: Areas are managed to protect migration and dispersal areas for wildlife. These areas provide safe connections between core areas.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

Maintain wildlife migration and dispersal areas to ensure the connection between core areas. Corridors assist with the preservation of habitat for all native species of plants and animals, especially TES species. The landscape is predominantly natural appearing. Vegetation composition and structure are largely influenced by biological processes and conditions, with minimal human influence. All existing lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old growth is retained and like amounts are provided in the future. Future lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old growth conditions are provided for. Prescribed fire is used where appropriate, to create or renew habitat and may be used to mimic natural disturbance regimes. Activities within and adjacent to riparian areas are managed to retain their value as corridors between core areas. Grazing of domestic livestock is allowed only where there is assurance that no reduction in wildlife capability and function will occur and where native plants flourish.

Corridors are unsuitable for timber production, but light thinning or selection cuts are allowed to reduce unnaturally high fuel loads for the purpose of reestablishing the natural fire regime.

Inventory and monitoring data on the movements of wildlife will be continually gathered in corridors.

Social

Connecting corridors offer a very high to high probability of experiencing solitude, closeness to nature and tranquility, as well as a high degree of self-reliance, challenge and risk. Facilities are rustic and exist primarily for site protection. Improvements to enhance recreational use, such as signing, may be present within the area, but are of a rustic nature. Dispersed camping may occur throughout the area. Allow motorized vehicles on open roads or designated trails only.

Administrative

Close and obliterate unneeded roads and those impairing wildlife as soon as funds become available. Consider allowing use of roads going to private inholdings by only the inholders. Construct new roads or reconstruct roads only for safety or to reduce resource damage. Prohibit off-road motorized vehicle use, except for emergencies.

Acquire inholdings and adjacent parcels to maintain or increase habitat effectiveness or where imminent development would be inconsistent with management area objectives of NFS lands.

Retain NFS lands if parcel is being used as winter range, if development would decrease habitat effectiveness on the remaining NFS lands or if it contains key or essential habitat or a unique or critical ecosystem. Dispose of NFS lands if the offered lands provide a net increase in habitat effectiveness in the same area and *one* of the following: (1) the parcel neither meets management area objectives nor other NFS purposes compatible with management area objectives; or (2) its development would not decrease the effectiveness of remaining habitat. Acquire rights-of-way that are needed to meet resource goals and objectives. Allow special uses that do not disrupt wildlife.

Standards and Guidelines

1. **(ST)** Maintain or increase habitat effectiveness, except where new access is required by law.
2. **(ST)** Discourage or prohibit human activities and travel wherever necessary, to allow effective habitat use during season of primary use by elk, deer and bighorn sheep. Minimum periods are May 15 through June 30 for elk calving, June 1 through June 30 for deer fawning, May 15 through June 30 for bighorn lambing, and December 1 through March 31 for wintering deer, elk and bighorn.
3. **(ST)** Discourage or prohibit human activities and travel wherever necessary to allow effective habitat use by other wildlife species, especially during the seasons of birthing and rearing of young.
4. **(ST)** Do not construct new roads except when they contribute to improved habitat or provide legal access. Obliterate any temporary roads within one year following intended use.
5. **(ST)** Adjust livestock grazing to meet wildlife habitat objectives.
6. **(ST)** Withdraw area from mineral entry and designate it as unavailable for oil and gas leasing.
7. **(ST)** Do not encourage snowmobile use and allow use on only a few designated roads.
8. **(GL)** Within existing spruce-fir and lodgepole pine old growth that is known or discovered, exclude vegetation treatments.
9. **(GL)** Allow, through vegetation protection, or encourage, through vegetation treatments, the development of future lodgepole pine and spruce-fir old-growth conditions.
10. **(GL)** Restrict mountain bicycle use to designated routes.

3.61 PRAIRIE WOODLANDS

Theme: Prairie woodlands are managed to maintain or enhance woody vegetation.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

Enhance and maintain a full range of natural compositional and successional stages of woody draws and shrubs to provide biologically diverse habitats for endemic wildlife and native plant species. Prescribed fire, wildland fire, and ungulate grazing are components of these ecosystems.

Social

Contacts with other people are infrequent. Recreational activities include hunting, dispersed recreation, camping, hiking, picnicking, nonmotorized travel, and horseback riding. There may be various restrictions to human activity to meet management objectives.

Administrative

A wide range of improvements is present, including fences, water developments, windmills and salt blocks. Roads are present only for access to developments. Existing improvements are removed when the opportunity arises.

Acquire areas necessary to achieve management area objectives or areas in which imminent development would be inconsistent with management area objectives. Retain lands that enhance achieving the management area objectives. Dispose of lands that are inconsistent with the management area objective *and* where potential development of such lands would be compatible with management area objectives. Acquire rights-of-way that are needed to meet resource goals and objectives. Allow compatible special uses.

Standards and Guidelines

1. (ST) Resolve all conflicts between other uses and the desired ecological condition of the prairie woodland in favor of the woodland.
2. (ST) Where the woodland falls within a grazing allotment, use range improvements that prevent trampling and browsing to protect trees and shrubs.

4.2 SCENERY

Theme: Areas are managed to protect or preserve scenic values and recreational uses of designated scenic byways and other heavily used scenic travel corridors.

Desired Condition

Physical/Biological

Maintain a variety of successional stages, plant communities, and associated wildlife through a combination of human manipulation and natural processes. Maintain or improve the communities to provide a pleasing appearance for visitors and to complement the recreational values. Emphasize the health and appearance of these communities to maintain their important scenic qualities. Vegetation alterations may be carried out to enhance viewing opportunities and to maintain long-term vigor and health of the vegetation. Vegetation management activities are, however, kept visually subordinate to the surrounding landscape.

Vegetation varies from background areas which appear natural to foreground and middle-ground areas where modifications may be noticed but do not attract attention. Improve areas to restore the desired appearance. Design new vegetation modifications to resemble natural patterns or to reflect less intrusion onto the landscape. Other ecological changes may affect the appearance.

Social

Opportunities exist to view high-quality scenery that represents the natural character of the Forests and Grassland. Opportunities also exist for viewing a variety of wildlife. Evidence of human activities or habitation due to mining, milling, or grazing may be present now and in the future.

Encounters between individuals or parties vary on most travelways. Expect less frequent contacts on primitive roads or trails, but frequent contact is acceptable in most cases. Limit use where frequent contact is not acceptable. Contacts away from trails are generally infrequent. Contacts are usually common in areas where use concentrates. Sounds from people or motorized recreational activities are usually common, and limit opportunities for solitude or isolation.

Provide a variety of motorized and nonmotorized recreational opportunities. Open roads provide access and roaded recreational opportunities, while closed roads provide nonmotorized opportunities. Provide access to natural attractions, water features, or areas that provide desired recreational opportunities. Use may be concentrated or dispersed, depending on the need to protect an area from degradation. A social type of recreational experience may be provided.

Administrative

Developed recreational sites may be common and are often emphasized in these travel corridors.

Facilities may be present to enhance viewing or recreational opportunities. Improvements such as improved roads, primitive roads, trails, bridges, fences, shelters, overlooks, signs or water diversions will blend into the landscape where feasible, be removed if no longer needed, or will be designed to be minimally intrusive into the landscape. Private facilities and communities may be present along these corridors.

Actively pursue acquisition of undeveloped inholdings in which development of the parcels would be inconsistent with the management area objectives. Acquire scenic easements. Retain lands that enhance management area objectives or where potential development would be inconsistent with the remaining NFS lands. Dispose of lands that do not contribute to the character of the area and whose potential development would not change the character of the remaining lands. Allow compatible special uses.

Directional, regulatory and informational signs are frequent to foster safe use, identify requirements for use of the area, and to provide route information.