

Figure 2.31

Lion Gulch Geographic Area

22,782 NFS Acres 10,583 Non-NFS Acres 33,365 Total Acres

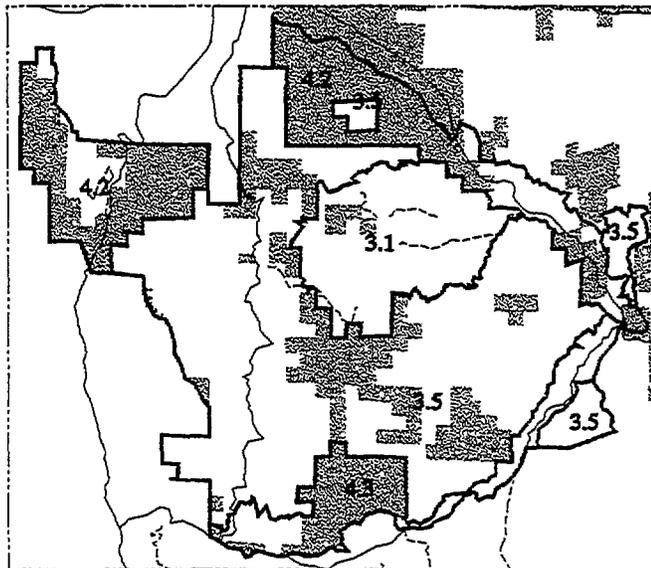
Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.1 - Special Interest Areas - Emphasizing Use or Interpretation
- 3.5 - Forested Flora or Fauna Habitats-Limited Management
- 4.2 - Scenery
- 4.3 - Dispersed Recreation

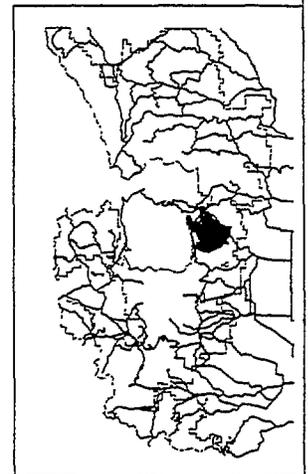
	NFS Acres
3.1	4,124
3.5	15,429
4.2	1,748
4.3	1,481

Legend

-  Not NFS Lands
-  Roads
-  Trails
-  Utility Corridors (0.00 Mi.)
-  Electronic Sites



Locator Map



Scale 1:200,000
0 1
Miles



LION GULCH GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Setting

The area is located west of U.S. Highway 36, east of Colorado Highway 7, and north of the Johnny Park Road. The area is a mix of meadows and forested areas with Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine at lower elevations and lodgepole pine at higher elevations. Important big game migration corridors and winter range are present. Elevations vary from 6,800 to 11,413 feet.

Vegetation management has occurred throughout the area for the past 100 years beginning with harvesting for materials for homesteads and ranches. Recent harvesting has been primarily in the form of small sales although some moderate-scale sales have been implemented in the more accessible portions of the area. Most vegetation is second growth. Spruce budworm affected much of the Douglas-fir in the 1980s. Fuel loadings are high due to the subsequent mortality. Small-scale nonlethal understory and mixed/variable wildland fires occur frequently in the ponderosa pine type. Stand-replacement wildland fires have occurred in the lodgepole pine type, affecting areas in excess of 300 acres. Early and late structural stages are underrepresented in all tree-cover types. The aspen-cover type is being encroached on by conifers as the stands increase in age. There are two livestock grazing allotments, one of them vacant. Recreational use (both motorized and nonmotorized) is high, except for winter, and continues to increase. The Lion Gulch Trailhead is the only developed recreational facility. The Homestead Meadows area has been added to the National Register of Historic Places and is a significant feature in the central portion of the area. Non-federal landownership comprises almost one-third of the lands within the geographic boundary including parts of the Estes Valley and several major subdivisions. Development on private lands of both year-round and seasonal housing continues to increase.

The current transportation system's primary access routes are U.S. Highway 36, Colorado Highway 7, Big Elk Meadows (Larimer County 118), Johnny Park (Larimer County 82, FDR 118), and Pierson Park/Fish Creek (FDR 119). Most secondary roads and user-created ways have been closed. There is a network of System trails located primarily in the Lion Gulch and Homestead Meadows areas. Winter motorized and nonmotorized use is sporadic due to inconsistent snow conditions.

Goals and Desired Conditions

Prescribed fire (including nonlethal understory and mixed/variable fires) may be implemented to reduce fuel loading, improve wildlife habitat or assist recruitment of old-growth structural stages.

The wildland fire management strategy is direct control. Accept insect and disease losses unless they threaten other ownership or cause unacceptable resource damage.

Manage rangelands towards desired plant communities and management objectives as outlined in management plans for specific allotments.

Close the Lion Gulch grazing allotment, now vacant, because of intermingled private lands.

Prohibit camping where uses impact soil, water and aesthetic resources.

Evaluate road and trail impacts to riparian areas and watershed conditions. Manage and restore road networks to reduce erosion and prevent deterioration of watershed conditions. Implement seasonal road closures to provide for wildlife habitat and resource protection during critical periods of the year. Consider closure of roads and trails that cause resource damage, or are in excess of National Forest System roads.

Cooperate with agencies and communities in the Estes Valley area to improve recreational opportunities and visual aesthetics. This may be accomplished by acquiring private lands from willing sellers or acquiring rights-of-way.

Limit issuance of special-use permits to minimize conflicts among users.

Manage National Historic Register sites to provide information and interpretive experiences.

Management Areas 3.1 and 3.5

Emphasize wildlife habitat in Management Area 3.5, and nonmotorized recreation in Management Area 3.1.

Manage vegetation to achieve a mix needed for wildlife habitat and to reduce fuel loading, especially near subdivisions. Manage lodgepole pine to reduce fuels, create openings, regenerate aspen and maintain thermal and hiding cover. Manage ponderosa pine to emulate conditions representative of a nonlethal understory fire regime and to emphasize old-growth recruitment and retention. Increase the amount of aspen represented in the landscape. Timber harvest is probable in the Homestead Meadows area to increase habitat potential, control fuel buildups and protect the Homestead Meadows Historic District from wildfire.

Manage existing roads for administrative use and nonmotorized travel by the public.

Use temporary access roads, as needed, to achieve fuels reduction and improve wildlife habitat; close roads once the activity is completed.

Manage trails for nonmotorized use.

Management Area 4.2

Emphasize scenery viewing and dispersed recreation.

Timber harvest is not allowed. Noncommercial vegetation management may occur for fuels reduction and scenic enhancement.

Travel Management Strategy, Lion Gulch Geographic Area

Management Area	Mode	Existing System	Convert Ways	New Rds/Trls	Extent of Additions	Extent of Obliterations
3.1	4WD	N	N	N	N	L
	MTR	N	N	N	N	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	Y	N	N	N	N
	NMT	Y	N	N	N	N
3.5	4WD	Y	N	N	N	H
	MTR	N	N	Y	L	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	N	N	N	N	N
	NMT	Y	N	Y	L	N
4.2	4WD	Y	N	N	N	N
	MTR	N	N	N	N	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	N	N	N	N	N
	NMT	Y	N	N	N	L
4.3	4WD	Y	N	N	N	L
	MTR	N	N	N	N	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	N	N	N	N	N
	NMT	N	N	N	N	N