

Appendix

E

MEDICINE BOW NATIONAL FOREST

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Appendix E

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Introduction

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Act) of 1968 (PL 90-542:16USC 1271-1287, as amended) is designed to preserve certain rivers and streams with outstanding natural, heritage, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The enabling legislation included eight rivers and, importantly, a process for expanding the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System). Since 1968, the Act has been amended many times, primarily to designate additional rivers or authorize rivers for study for possible inclusion.

There are two methods by which rivers are identified for study as potential additions to the National System: by Act of Congress under Section 5(a) or through agency-initiated study under Section 5(d)(1). Section 5(d)(1) of the Act requires that “in all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources, consideration shall be given by all Federal agencies involved to potential wild, scenic and recreational areas.” Through Section 5(d)(1), the Forest Service is required to assess rivers under its management jurisdiction and determine whether any rivers are worthy additions to the National System.

The first step in evaluating the potential of a river for inclusion in the National System is eligibility, which is an inventory to determine whether a river is free-flowing and possesses one or more outstandingly remarkable value(s). The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Act) defines free-flowing as “existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway.” The definition further allows for the existence of low dams, diversions or other modification of the waterway at the time the river is studied provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance. However, future construction of such structures is not allowed. For a value to be judged outstandingly remarkable, it must be river-related and determined significant (unique, rare or exemplary) within a region of comparison or nationally.

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Once a river is found eligible, the Act and Interagency Guidelines¹ provide direction for establishing a classification. The classification system describes the type and intensity of development in existence at the date of the river's study:

- ◆ Wild rivers: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.
- ◆ Scenic rivers: Those rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
- ◆ Recreational rivers: Those rivers or sections of rivers readily accessible by road or railroad that may have some development along their shoreline and that may have undergone some impoundments or diversion in the past.

Where levels of human activity vary within the study area, the study reach may be segmented into one or more class.

The final step of the study process is a suitability determination; i.e., the decision as to whether a river is a worthy addition to the National System. Factors considered in this planning effort include:

- ◆ Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National System.
- ◆ Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land
- ◆ Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National System.
- ◆ Public, state and local government interests.
- ◆ Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a wild and scenic river.

Suitability recommendations will receive further consideration by the Department of Agriculture and must be presented to Congress for their consideration as additions to the National System. Only Congress has the authority to amend the Act and add a river recommended by a federal agency.

¹ Department of the Interior and Agriculture Interagency Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification and Management of River Areas," published in the Federal Register (Vol. 47, No. 173; September 7, 1982, pp. 39454-39461).

A river subsequently added to the National System will require the development of a comprehensive river management plan. Such plan will provide a framework for the protection and enhancement of the river's free-flowing condition, water quality and outstandingly remarkable values.

The Act does not confer any regulatory authority to the river-administering agency on private lands or other ownerships. Rather, where nonfederal lands are included in a component of the National System, the federal river-administering agency works with landowners, and state and local governments to protect river values. Within limits specified in the Act, federal river-administering agencies can acquire lands or interests in land.

Landownership within designated boundaries can be, and often is, a combination of federal, state, and private. If designation of any rivers were to occur, and if private land lies within the corridors, the Forest Service would consider acquisition of these lands only when the owner is willing to sell or exchange land for the appraised value. Often there is no need or interest in acquiring nonfederal lands. Federal acquisition is only necessary when activities on private land threaten river values and other tools (e.g., technical assistance/partnership) are not adequate to protect values. The federal government is limited to acquiring no more than 100 acres per mile of stream of private lands within a designated stream corridor. In fact, agencies are not required, in any case, to acquire any private land. In addition, recreational, agricultural, and residential uses may continue so long as they do not adversely effect protecting identified river values. Recreational users are cautioned to be aware of and respect private property rights. Existing water rights and existing jurisdiction of states and the United States over waters as determined by established principles of law are not affected by designation.

Designation neither implies nor gives the government control of private lands within the river corridor. Although Congress could include private lands within the boundaries of the designated river area, management restrictions would apply only to public lands.

Wild and Scenic River Eligibility/Classification Process:

1. Identify streams to study. This step must include the following:

- ◆ Rivers listed in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- ◆ Rivers listed in the National Rivers or Outstanding Rivers List.
- ◆ Rivers identified during scooping.

All streams on the Forest, perennial and non-perennial, were reviewed. There were no congressionally designated study rivers or any rivers identified on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory list for the Medicine Bow National Forest. Other rivers looked at included those generated through discussion with the districts as well as those contained in the list American Rivers (a list showing state-wide

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significant recreational fisheries). Douglas Creek, Encampment River, French Creek North and South, Little Missouri (being study under another planning process), North Platte, and Pioneer Ditch were all on the American Rivers list.

Two of the rivers reviewed were already deemed suitable by the 1985 Forest plan (the North Platte River and the Encampment River).

- 2. Determine if river segments are free flowing.** This means the section must be riverine in appearance and be free of high head dams and extensive rip-rap or diversions.

The Pioneer Ditch was deemed to not meet the free-flowing requirement and so was not carried further along in the process.

- 3. Determine if the rivers possess any outstandingly remarkable values (ORV).**

These values should be directly river related which means they must be located in the river or river corridor (1/4 mile back from the river), must contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem, and must owe their location or existence to the river. In order to be assessed as "outstandingly remarkable" a river related value must be a unique, rare or exemplary feature that is significant at a regional or national level.

Those rivers deemed to have outstandingly remarkable values were then given a classification rating of wild, scenic or recreational.

There was no management area specifically for wild and scenic rivers in the 1985 Plan. In the 1985 Plan, the North Platte and the Encampment Rivers were recommended to Congress for designation as wild and scenic. However, since the rivers are within the boundaries of wilderness areas, the 1985 Plan protected their identified river-related values through wilderness management prescription. Congress has not designated either river in the interim, and they remain under the wilderness prescription. The table below displays the results of the inventory of streams for Wild and Scenic River eligibility.

Table E-1. Results of wild and scenic river inventory.

District	River/Stream	Eligible	Length (miles)	Classification	Outstanding remarkable values
Brush Cr/Hayden Laramie	North Platte	Yes	16.35	Wild/scenic	S, R, W, F
Brush Cr/Hayden	Encampment	Yes	11.7	Wild/scenic	S, R, W, V, F
Brush Cr/Hayden	North Fork Little Snake	Yes	9.36	Scenic	F
Brush Cr/Hayden	West Branch North Fork Little Snake	Yes	7.72	Scenic	F
Brush Cr/Hayden	Roaring Fk. Little Snake	Yes	3.73	Wild	F
Brush Cr/Hayden	Rose Creek	Yes	.89	Scenic	F

District	River/Stream	Eligible	Length (miles)	Classification	Outstanding remarkable values
Brush Cr/Hayden	Big Sandstone*	Yes	14.0	Wild	S, W, V, F
Brush Cr/Hayden	Solomon Creek*	Yes	4.0	Scenic	F
S=Scenic, R=Recreational, W=Wildlife, F=Fish, V=Vegetative					

* These public proposed rivers did not meet the FS eligibility requirements, but they were included as proposed Wild or Scenic River in Alternative F.

Organization of this Report

Each stream evaluation is divided into the following sections: description, eligibility, potential classification, alternatives, and suitability.

North Platte River

Description

The North Platte River on the Medicine Bow NF comprises the southern boundary between the Laramie District and the Brush Creek/Hayden District. Approximately 16.35 miles of the North Platte River have been determined as eligible for Wild and Scenic classification. Headwaters of the North Platte River originate in the high mountains of Colorado. At the first major boat launch, known as Routt Access, the elevation is 7,900 feet. The river drops steadily through steep-walled canyons with an average gradient of approximately 30 feet per mile in the steepest sections. After leaving the canyons, the river consistently widens and meanders as it makes its way toward the Missouri River on the Nebraska-Iowa border. The portion of the North Platte River eligible for wild and scenic classification is located almost exclusively in the North Platte River Wilderness Area. The riparian vegetation along the river provides habitat for a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic organisms such as elk, mule deer, black bear, prairie falcons, American kestrels, mallards, Canada geese, great blue herons, kingfishers, cutthroat trout and many other species. The North Platte River Canyon provides crucial big horn sheep winter and yearlong range as well as bald eagle nesting grounds. This section of the river is also very important to recreationists. Several outfitters and guides are permitted on the river above and below Sixmile access for whitewater rafting, fishing, and canoeing trips. All of the upper North Platte River is navigable. Over 120 miles of free-flowing water, from the torrential whitewater in Northgate Canyon through the rolling agricultural lands of the Platte Valley, provide recreationists with a wide variety of river experiences.

Eligibility

The eligible section of the North Platte River flows from a location in Section 14, Township 13 North, Range 80 West, north to Section 26, Township 14 North, Range 80 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of the North Platte River is contiguous with the eligible section of the North Platte River to the south identified in the Routt National Forest Plan. The Medicine Bow National Forest section of the North Platte River was analyzed in the early phases of the forest planning process and classified as eligible for Wild from the Colorado state line to the confluence with Douglas Creek and Scenic from Douglas Creek to Bennett Peak.

Potential Classification

The inventory covered 16.35 miles of the North Platte River that flow fully within lands administered by the Forest Service. This river section holds the potential classification as Wild and Scenic. Outstandingly remarkable features include scenic steep walled canyons, a blue ribbon trout fishery, high quality rafting and canoeing, crucial big horn sheep winter and year-long range, bald eagle nesting grounds, and it is the largest river on the entire Medicine Bow National Forest.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternative A: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternative B, C, D DEIS, D FEIS, E and F: Recommended for designation with 13.44 miles wild and 2.91 miles scenic classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System: The free-flowing section of the North Platte River is very scenic. A wide variety of visually appealing habitats are obvious from the river such as old growth lodge pole pine forests, cottonwood and willow stands, juniper breaks, jutting rock outcrops, and steep canyon walls. There is a high opportunity for recreational use of the river through rafting, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and hiking along the corridor. The canyon is located in the Platte River Wilderness Area; it is very remote and offers a high degree of solitude and challenge.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. There is a parcel of private land located within the eligible area at the terminus. A large guest ranch maintains this land. The remainder of land ownership is Forest Service except in Section 1, Township 13 North, Range 81 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming; in this area, the river flows onto Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land for approximately ¼ of a mile then back onto Forest Service land.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - This area is almost entirely within the Platte River Wilderness boundary, with the exception of the section that flows onto the BLM. There are three access roads, two to private land and one to a Forest Service campground. A proposed BLM access road improvement near Prospect Mountain could be affected by a Wild and Scenic River designation.
- ◆ **Water** - There is a 1,400-acre power withdrawal, PSC #374, with an action date of 3/23/1945 located near the upper terminus. This withdrawal was identified in a nationwide survey as a suitable dam site by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. These sites are encumbrances on the Public Domain in the form of power reserves. At this time, they are not active and there are no leases from a power agency or company. The Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 states “the designation and continued existence of the Huston Park, Encampment River, Platte River and Savage Run Wildernesses shall not, under any Federal law, in any way impair or affect any present or future water rights for, and shall not prevent, impair, or in any way affect construction operation or maintenance of, the Stage II or Stage III water development projects as presently defined in Wyoming Statutes.” Wild and Scenic designation may prevent the development of the power withdrawals.
- ◆ **Minerals** – Because of crystalline rocks at surface and at depth, there is no known oil and gas development potential. The river section in the Platte River Wilderness Area has been withdrawn from mineral entry. Along the northern portion near the lower terminus, there is a 440-acre recreation withdrawal paralleling the river which eliminates the nonwilderness portion from mineral entry. There are no foreseeable effects of Wild and Scenic designation on mineral development.
- ◆ **Timber** - The portion located in wilderness is classified as non-suitable for timber production due to its current designation. The portion located outside of wilderness is also classified as non-suitable for timber production due to steep topography.

- ♦ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation could provide some protection to fish, amphibian, and wildlife populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas. In the Platte River Wilderness, the Wild designation may not have any effect on wildlife and fisheries populations due to its location within a designated wilderness.
- ♦ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There are 15 permitted river outfitters. The area includes three campgrounds nearby and/or within the designation corridor. Sixmile campground has nine sites; three sites are designed for Recreational Vehicle use. There is a \$10 fee, three vault toilets, and one water hand pump. On average, Sixmile campground receives 10% occupation throughout the summer months. Pike Pole campground is a heavily used facility with 80%-100% occupation throughout the season. This campground is managed as a dispersed site; it has six campsites, some fire grates, and one pit toilet. Pickeroon campground is also managed as a dispersed site and has, on average, 80%-100% use during the season. This campground has eight campsites, some fire grates, and one pit toilet. Both of these dispersed campgrounds have primitive facilities with no water or trash pickup. Most of the users camp in trailers or RVs. National Forest System Road (NFSR) #512 accesses Pike Pole campground and is located within the Scenic River corridor. National Forest System Trail (NFST) #473 begins at Sixmile campground and follows the river north for approximately seven miles. Recreational use is predicted to increase and no major changes are expected from Wild and Scenic River designation. The designation may enhance recreation and the scenic qualities of the North Platte River.
- ♦ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. The 80-acre parcel of private land near the lower terminus is probably not available for land acquisition. The management of the Wild and Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

Encampment River

Description

The free-flowing 11.7-mile section of the Encampment River eligible for Wild and Scenic status runs the entire length of the Encampment River Wilderness Area. The river forms a deep spectacular canyon, which is utilized by black bear, big horn sheep, elk, mule deer, and other species. The area is also a big horn sheep lambing area. Recreational fishermen and boaters enjoy the relative solitude, excellent fishery, and challenging rapids that the river canyon provides. The Encampment River Canyon is home to a Forest Service Region 2 sensitive plant, the clustered lady's-slipper.

Eligibility

The eligible section of the Encampment River flows from a location in Section 14, Township 13 North, Range 84 West, north to Section 1, Township 13 North, Range 84 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of the Encampment River was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as eligible for Wild from the wilderness boundary downstream to the Forest boundary and Scenic upstream of the wilderness boundary to the Wyoming-Colorado state line.

Potential Classification

The 11.7 miles of the Encampment River considered for Wild and Scenic classification flow fully within lands administered by the Forest Service. Outstandingly remarkable features include an identified Forest Service Region 2 sensitive plant—the clustered lady's-slipper; scenic steep walled canyons, highly varied scenery, a regionally recognized trout fishery, high quality kayaking and expert rafting opportunities, and big horn sheep lambing and year-long range.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternative A: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternative B, D DEIS, D FEIS, E, and F: Recommended with 10.03 miles of wild and 1.3 miles scenic classification.
- ◆ Alternative C: Recommended with 10.03 miles of wild classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The free-flowing section of the Encampment River is very scenic. A wide variety of visually appealing habitats are obvious from the river such as old growth lodge pole pine forests, willow stands, juniper breaks, jutting rock outcrops, and steep canyon walls. There is a high opportunity for recreational use of the river through rafting, kayaking, fishing, and hiking along the corridor. The Encampment River Canyon is home to a Forest Service Region 2 sensitive plant, the clustered lady's-slipper. The canyon located in the Encampment River Wilderness Area; it is very remote and offers a high degree of solitude and challenge.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. At the lower terminus (northern Forest boundary), the river flows through a parcel of private land. This section of the river is approximately half a mile in length. The remainder of the 11.7-mile river section considered for Wild and Scenic classification flows through Forest Service lands. Nearly ten of these miles run through the Encampment River Wilderness area.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ♦ **Transportation** - NFSR #496 intersects the potential Scenic corridor near the upper terminus. There is a trail access road, NFSR #409.B, through the lower terminus Scenic corridor. The remainder of the potential Wild and Scenic River runs through the Encampment River Wilderness area and contains no other roads.
- ♦ **Water** - The potential Wild and Scenic River corridor contains portions of two power withdrawals and a special use permit for an irrigation ditch. There are no other known potential uses of the water that might be affected by the designation of a Wild and Scenic River in this area. These withdrawals were identified in a nationwide survey as suitable dam sites by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. These sites are encumbrances on the Public Domain in the form of power reserves; at this time they are not active, and there are no leases from a power agency or company. The Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 states "the designation and continued existence of the Huston Park, Encampment River, Platte River and Savage Run Wildernesses shall not, under any Federal law, in any way impair or affect any present or future water rights for, and shall not prevent, impair, or in any way affect construction operation or maintenance of, the Stage II or Stage III water development

projects as presently defined in Wyoming Statutes.” Wild and Scenic designation may prevent the development of the power withdrawals.

- ◆ **Minerals** - Because of crystalline rocks at surface and at depth, there is no known oil and gas development potential. The United States government has acquired the outstanding mineral reserves. There are no foreseeable effects of Wild and Scenic designation on mineral, oil and gas development.
- ◆ **Timber** - The portion located in wilderness is classified as non-suitable for timber production due to its current designation. The portion located area outside of wilderness is also classified as non-suitable for timber production due to steep topography.
- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation could provide some protection to fish, amphibian, and wildlife populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas. In the Encampment River Wilderness the Wild designation may not have any effect on wildlife and fisheries populations due to its location within a designated wilderness.
- ◆ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - This area includes five permitted fishing outfitters with day use only, one overnight horseback outfitter, and two permitted day use horseback outfitters. There are some authorizations for big game hunter outfitting near this river segment; this use is occasional to nonexistent.
- ◆ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River: There are 98.6 acres of private land near the lower terminus of the potential Wild and Scenic River. The private land has existing improvements, buildings, and facilities. The Forest Service typically doesn’t exchange or purchase this type of private property. The management of the Wild and Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

North Fork Little Snake River

Description

North Fork Little Snake River is a typical stream in a montane environment, located in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of the Continental Divide. This stream is a tributary of the Little Snake River. The Little Snake River joins the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. Approximately one to one and one half miles of the eligible Scenic River is located in the Huston Park Wilderness, approximately one mile through the Huston Park Addition Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) number R20611, and approximately six miles flows through the Solomon Creek IRA number R20607.

Eligibility

The eligible section of the North Fork, Little Snake River flows from a location in Section 25, Township 13 North, Range 85 West, north to Section 12, Township 12 North, Range 86 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of the North Fork was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as eligible for Scenic.

Potential Classification

The 9.36 miles of the free-flowing North Fork, Little Snake River considered for Scenic classification flows through lands administered by the USDA Forest Service. Outstandingly remarkable features include a wild, genetically pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream, along with other tributaries, represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado cutthroat trout remaining in their native range.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, B, C, D DEIS, and D FEIS: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternatives E and F: Recommended for designation with 9.36 miles of scenic classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The North Fork, along with other tributaries, represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado River cutthroat trout remaining in their native range. The populations are wild and genetically pure.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The North Fork, Little Snake River originates in the Huston Park Wilderness and runs for

approximately one and one half to two miles until it reaches the Huston Park Addition IRA number R20611. It flows for approximately one mile until it passes into the Solomon Creek IRA, number R20607. The North Fork, Little Snake flows for approximately six miles through the Solomon Creek IRA and the remainder of the Scenic corridor flows through roaded areas managed by the USDA Forest Service.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - The NFSR #809.1B crosses the North Fork approximately one and one half miles south of the Huston Park Wilderness boundary over a culvert. This is the only road located along the North Fork within the Scenic River parameters. This road is part of the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities water project system of roads. It is closed to the public year-long. The Savery-Fireline Stock Driveway, NFST #861.2, also crosses the North Fork. The possible designation of Scenic has no foreseeable negative effects on transportation.
- ◆ **Water** - The Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities has 13 diversions on the North Fork and its tributaries. The diversions include Stage I and II collections. The Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 states “the designation and continued existence of the Huston Park, Encampment River, Platte River and Savage Run Wildernesses shall not, under any Federal law, in any way impair or affect any present or future water rights for, and shall not prevent, impair, or in any way affect construction operation or maintenance of, the Stage II or Stage III water development projects as presently defined in Wyoming Statutes.”
- ◆ **Minerals** - There are no current active mine claims. There has been some historical activity. There is a low potential for oil and gas development.
- ◆ **Timber** - The area included in wilderness is classified as non-suitable for timber production due to its current designation. The portion outside of wilderness is classified as suitable for timber production. Scenic River designation may hinder opportunities for timber management.
- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation could provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas.

- ♦ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There is no subsistence use in the area. The majority of use occurs during big game hunting season. There is one permitted outfitter who uses the drainage from the Huston Park Wilderness boundary to the upper terminus. The designation of the North Fork, Little Snake River as a Scenic River has no potential negative effects on recreation or the scenic qualities of the area and may enhance it and its scenic qualities.
- ♦ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. Near the lower terminus of the Scenic River is a small parcel of private land. The estimated value of the 160-acre parcel is over \$2,500 per acre. The availability is not known at this time. The management of the Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

West Branch Little Snake River

Description

The West Branch, Little Snake River is a typical stream in a montane environment, located in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of the Continental Divide.

This river is a tributary of the North Fork of the Little Snake River. The Little Snake River joins the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. The West Branch, Little Snake River's upper terminus and approximately the first three miles is located in the Huston Park Wilderness Area. Approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile is located in the Huston Park Addition Inventoried Wilderness Area (IRA) number R20611 and approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile is in the Little Snake River IRA number R20606.

Eligibility

The eligible section of the West Branch flows from a location in Section 8, Township 13 North, Range 86 West, north to Section 3, Township 112 North, Range 86 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of the West Branch River was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as eligible for Scenic.

Potential Classification

The 7.72 miles of the free-flowing West Branch, Little Snake River considered for Scenic classification flows through lands administered by the Forest Service. Outstandingly remarkable features include a wild and genetically pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream, along with other tributaries, represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado cutthroat trout remaining in their native range.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, B, C, D DEIS, and D FEIS: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternatives E and F: Recommended for designation with 7.72 miles of scenic classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The West Branch, Little Snake River, along with other tributaries represents the largest contiguous populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout remaining in their native range. The populations are wild and genetically pure.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The West Branch, Little Snake River near the lower terminus runs through a parcel of private land for approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in section 2, Township 12 North, Range 86 West. The remainder of the river section considered for Scenic classification flows through USDA Forest Service lands. Approximately three miles of the river runs from its upper terminus at the Continental Divide through the Huston Park Wilderness area.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - There are no planned or proposed road projects in the area. The NFSR #809.1B crosses the river over a culvert. This road is closed to public use and is part of the Cheyenne Board of Utilities water project.

- ◆ **Water** - The West Branch is the second to the last water diversion on the west collection line of the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities water projects. The West Branch has by-pass flushing and maintenance flows. There is a diversion located on Standard Creek, a tributary of the West Branch, found in Section 24, Township 13 North, Range 86 West. The diversion on the West Branch is located in Section 24, Township 13 North, Range 86 West. Below these water diversions, the designation as a Scenic River may impact future water rights. Scenic River designation would aid in the conservation of flows to protect the native fish populations identified in the eligibility study. The Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 states “the designation and continued existence of the Huston Park, Encampment River, Platte River and Savage Run Wildernesses shall not, under any Federal law, in any way impair or affect any present or future water rights for, and shall not prevent, impair, or in any way affect construction operation or maintenance of, the Stage II or Stage III water development projects as presently defined in Wyoming Statutes.”
- ◆ **Minerals** - Oil and gas development potential is moderate to low. There are no known mineral claims in the area. There are no foreseeable effects of Scenic designation on mineral development.
- ◆ **Timber** - The area in the wilderness is classified as non-suitable for timber production due to its current designation. The area out of wilderness is classified as suitable for timber production. The Scenic River designation may forego opportunities for timber management.
- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation could provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas.
- ◆ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There is no subsistence use in the area. The highest recreational use is during big game hunting season. The majority of the use is from the public, but it also includes three permitted outfitters. Scenic designation has no potential negative effects on recreation, and may enhance it along with the scenic values.
- ◆ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow for increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. The private land located in Section 2, Township 12 North, Range 86 West has some improvements, buildings and facilities. The estimated value of the land is over \$2,500 per acre. The availability is not known at this time and the Forest Service typically doesn't exchange or purchase this type of private property with new improvements, buildings, and facilities. The management of the Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

Roaring Fork Little Snake River

Description

Roaring Fork, Little Snake River is a typical stream in a montane environment, located in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of the Continental Divide. This stream is a tributary of the Little Snake River. The Little Snake River joins the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. Approximately two to two and one half miles of the eligible Scenic River is located in the Huston Park Wilderness area and the remainder is in the Little Snake IRA number R20606.

Eligibility

The eligible section of the Roaring Fork flows from a location in Section 12, Township 13 North, Range 86 West, north to Section 21, Township 13 North, Range 86 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of the Roaring Fork was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as eligible for Scenic.

Potential Classification

The 3.73 miles of free flowing the Roaring Fork considered for Scenic classification flows through lands administered by the Forest Service. Outstandingly remarkable features include a wild and genetically pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream along with other tributaries represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado cutthroat trout remaining in their native range.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, C, D DEIS, and D FEIS: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternatives B, E, and F: Recommended for designation with 3.73 miles of wild classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The Roaring Fork, along with other tributaries, represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado River cutthroat trout remaining in their native range. The populations are wild and genetically pure.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The segment of the Roaring Fork, Little Snake River eligible for Scenic River classification flows through USDA Forest Service lands. Approximately two to two and one half miles of the river run from its upper terminus near the Continental Divide through the Huston Park Wilderness area.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - There are no existing or planned roads within the eligible Roaring Fork Wild River corridor. There is no foreseeable effect on transportation due to Wild designation.
- ◆ **Water** - There are off-Forest water rights as well as two on-Forest water rights. Wild designation may affect these rights.
- ◆ **Minerals** - The historical Itmay mine claim located in Sections 11 and 14, Township 13 North, Range 86 West is now vacant, and there are no active claims. The Forest Service owns the surface rights of the Susquehanna claim block, while the mineral rights are privately owned. The Bureau of Mines has confirmed acid rock drainage from the Itmay adit. No research or determination of influence of the acid rock drainage on the Roaring Fork River has been made. It is possible that acid rock drainage is leaching from a dump rock pile into the stream. There are no current active mine claims, and Wild designation will have no negative effect on mineral projects.
- ◆ **Timber** - The area in the wilderness is classified as non-suitable for timber production due to its current designation. The area out of wilderness is classified as suitable for timber production. The Wild River designation may hinder opportunities for timber management.

- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Wild designation could provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish disease as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas.
- ◆ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There is no subsistence activity in the area. This area is a very popular hunting area. There is one permitted outfitter and NFST #860, a hiking/horse-riding trail, follows the Roaring Fork River the entire distance of the Wild corridor. There are no expected adverse impacts on recreation by Wild River designation, and it may enhance the recreation and scenic qualities of the area.
- ◆ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow for increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. The Itmay parcel is a wilderness inholding of 76.73 acres. This parcel of land may be exchangeable; it was last appraised in 1995 for \$1,200 per acre. There is no road access to the parcel. The management of the Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

Rose Creek

Description

Rose Creek is a typical stream in a montane environment; it is located in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of the Continental Divide. This stream is a tributary of the North Fork of the Little Snake River. The North Fork of the Little Snake River meets the Little Snake River and then joins the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. The entire eligible Scenic River is located in the Solomon Creek IRA number R20607.

Eligibility

The eligible section of Rose Creek flows from a location in Section 17, Township 12 North, Range 85 West, north to Section 18, Township 12 North, Range 85 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of Rose Creek was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as eligible for Scenic.

Potential Classification

The 0.89 miles of free-flowing Rose Creek considered for Scenic classification flows through lands administered by the Forest Service. Outstandingly remarkable features include a wild and genetically pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream along with other tributaries represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado cutthroat trout remaining in their native range.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, B, C, D DEIS, and D FEIS: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternatives E and F: Recommended for designation with .89 miles of scenic classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Rose Creek, along with other tributaries, represents the largest contiguous population of Colorado River cutthroat trout remaining in their native range. The populations are wild and genetically pure.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The river section of Rose Creek considered for Wild and Scenic classification flows entirely through Forest Service lands.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - There are no roads crossing or paralleling Rose Creek within the eligible parameters. Scenic designation would not have an effect on transportation.

- ◆ **Water** - Rose Creek has the last diversion on the South Collection Line for the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities. This diversion is located on State Trust Land at Section 16, Township 12 North, Range 85 West. Below this water diversion the designation as a Scenic River may impact future water rights. Scenic River designation would aid in the conservation of flows to protect the native fish populations identified in the eligibility study.
- ◆ **Minerals** - There are no known active or historical mining claims in the area. There is a low potential for oil and gas development. There are no foreseeable effects of Scenic designation on mineral development.
- ◆ **Timber** - This area is classified as suitable for timber production. The Scenic River designation may forego any opportunities for timber management. Timber production opportunities are currently impeded because Rose Creek is located in the Solomon Creek IRA and includes a high number of aspen stands.
- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation would provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The control of road construction reduces disturbance to wildlife during critical nesting and birthing times. Greater distance from roads gives wildlife species more security areas.
- ◆ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There is no subsistence activity in the area. The majority of use occurs during big game hunting season. There are no permitted outfitters or trails in the area. Scenic designation has no potential adverse effects on recreation, and may enhance it along with the scenic values.
- ◆ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow for increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. There is no private land within the eligible Rose Creek Scenic River corridor. The management of the Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

Big Sandstone (public proposed)

Description

Big Sandstone is a typical montane and foothills/canyon stream; it is located in the Sierra Madre Mountains. This stream is a tributary of Savery Creek. Savery Creek joins the Little Snake and then the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. Approximately six to seven miles of the nominated Wild River is located in the Big Sandstone IRA number R20603, approximately 7 ½ miles in the Singer Peak IRA number R20602, and approximately ½ mile is located in the Deep Creek IRA number R20608. There is a small private land inholding where NFSR #801 crosses the creek in Sections 18 and 19, Township 14 North, Range 87 West.

Eligibility

The nominated section of Big Sandstone Creek flows from a location in Section 7, Township 14 North, Range 86 West, east to Section 32, Township 14 North, Range 88 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. This section of Big Sandstone Creek was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and classified as ineligible for Wild and Scenic, although, Biodiversity Associates of Laramie, Wyoming recommended it.

Potential Classification

The 14 miles of free-flowing Big Sandstone Creek recommended for Wild classification flows through lands administered by the Forest Service. Features include a scenic canyon formed through the sedimentary rock of the Sierra Madre Mountains, a population of native Colorado River cutthroat trout (which is not protected from cross-breeding with other species), the rare clustered lady's-slipper; also present are tiger salamanders, smooth green snakes, and northern goshawks.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, B, C, D DEIS, D FEIS, and E: Not recommended for designation.
- ◆ Alternative F: Recommended for designation with 14 miles of wild classification.

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Big Sandstone Creek is a free-flowing stream that flows through a scenic canyon formed through the sedimentary rock of the Sierra Madre Mountains, supports a population of native Colorado River cutthroat trout (although it is not protected from cross-breeding with other species), rare clustered lady's-slippers, as well as tiger salamanders, smooth green snakes, and northern goshawks. It was determined by the Forest analysis that

although Big Sandstone Creek is free-flowing, it does not possess any outstandingly remarkable values at the regional or national level. Thus, it was found to be ineligible for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The segment of Big Sandstone Creek recommended for Wild River classification flows through USDA Forest Service lands. Approximately 1/8 of a mile flows through a parcel of private land.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - The Deep Creek-Fireline Stock Driveway crosses Big Sandstone Creek. NFSR #874 parallels Big Sandstone Creek near the upper terminus for approximately seven miles then crosses the stream and continues south. This road is a popular four-wheel drive road. NFSR #801 crosses Big Sandstone via culvert. This road is a major level-four, high-use transportation route. There are no roads after NFSR #801 crosses the stream. Wild designation may require these roads be closed.
- ◆ **Water** - There are no known water diversions along Big Sandstone Creek. Wild designation would protect the free-flowing nature of the stream.
- ◆ **Minerals** - Where NFSR #801 crosses Big Sandstone, there is a private parcel of land, M.S. 353 (12/12/1908 patent date). This parcel is a hard rock locatable claim. This area has low to moderate potential for oil and gas development. Douglas Creek, a tributary, experienced historic gold mining. Wild designation would prevent mining and oil and gas development activity along the nominated Wild corridor.
- ◆ **Timber** - The lower portion of Big Sandstone runs through a steep canyon. This inhibits timber production although the area is classified for timber productivity. The creek is surrounded by aspen-dominated forests that are not commercially viable. Big Sandstone Creek runs through portions of 3 IRAs, which further limits timber production. Wild designation may have no effect on timber production in the area.
- ◆ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Wild designation could provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well.

- ♦ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - There is no subsistence activity in the area. This area is very popular for hunting, fishing, four-wheel driving, and ATV use. Wild designation would impact the motorized use but may enhance the scenic qualities and hunting and fishing experiences for nonmotorized users.
- ♦ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. The private land is not available for exchange. The management of the Wild River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.

Solomon Creek (public proposed)

Description

Solomon Creek is a typical stream in a montane environment; it is located in the Sierra Madre Mountains west of the Continental Divide. This stream is a tributary of the North Fork of the Little Snake River. The Little Snake River joins the Yampa River in Colorado on its way toward the Green River. Approximately three miles of the nominated Scenic River is located in the Solomon Creek IRA number R20607 and approximately ½ mile is located in the Huston Park Wilderness Addition IRA number R20611.

Eligibility

Solomon Creek flows from a location in Section 32, Township 13 North, Range 85 West, south to Section 7, Township 13 North, Range 85 West, 6th Principle Meridian, Carbon County, Wyoming. Solomon Creek was analyzed in the early phases of the Medicine Bow National Forest planning process and was considered ineligible for Wild and Scenic River classification, although, Biodiversity Associates of Laramie, Wyoming recommended it.

Potential Classification

The four mile long Solomon Creek flows through lands administered by the Forest Service. Features include a wild and genetically pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream along with other tributaries represents the largest

contiguous population of Colorado cutthroat trout. This stream also maintains a population of other native species such as mottled sculpin and mountain whitefish.

Alternatives

- ◆ Alternatives A, B, C, D DEIS, D FEIS, and E: Not recommended for designation
- ◆ Alternative F: Recommended for designation with 4 miles of scenic classification

Suitability

Suitability Factor 1: Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. Solomon Creek is a free-flowing stream that supports a population of genetically pure native Colorado River cutthroat trout. It was determined by the Forest analysis that although Solomon Creek is free-flowing and supports native Colorado River cutthroat trout, it does not possess any outstandingly remarkable values at the regional or national level. Thus, it was found to be ineligible for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Suitability Factor 2: Current status of landownership and use in the area, including the amount of private land and the uses of such land. The segment of Solomon Creek recommended for Wild River classification flows through USDA Forest Service lands. A very small portion flows through a parcel of private land.

Suitability Factor 3: Foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed by designation and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

- ◆ **Transportation** - Near the upper terminus, the stream is crossed by NFSR #809.1B. This road is closed to the public but used by the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities and is maintained at a high level. NFSR #851.1D, a four-wheel drive road, accesses a hiking trail. There are no foreseeable effects on transportation of a Scenic designation.
- ◆ **Water** - There are diversions on each of the major tributaries for the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities water projects. Solomon Creek has by-pass flushing and maintenance flows.
- ◆ **Minerals** - There is no known mineral activity and oil and gas development potential is low. There is no known effect of Scenic River designation.
- ◆ **Timber** - The area is classified as suitable for timber production. A Scenic River designation may forego opportunities for timber management.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

- ♦ **Fisheries and Wildlife** - The Scenic designation could provide some protection to fish and amphibian populations by controlling road construction. Fewer roads reduce the pressure from sportsmen; vehicles and the increased amount of people can transport fish diseases as well. The nominated section of Solomon Creek is relatively small but important for native fish spawning.
- ♦ **Recreation, Scenic, and Subsistence** - The area is very popular during hunting season. There are two permitted outfitters who use the upper reach for backpacking and hunting trips. The Verde Mine trail, NFST #858, begins near the upper terminus of the nominated section and heads north into the Huston Park wilderness. The trail follows the creek for approximately ½ mile. There are no known effects on Scenic designation on recreation.
- ♦ **Effects of Non-designation** - This area would not be managed under the wild and scenic river management prescriptions. Other management prescriptions could allow increased development and use of the area for other resource emphasis.

Suitability Factor 4: Public, state, and local government interests. There has been little interest in designation of wild and scenic rivers.

Suitability Factor 5: Estimated costs of land acquisition and management as a Wild and Scenic River. There is no private land to acquire. The management of the Scenic River would include sign installation for boundary posting and regulation enforcement. Initial sign cost would be in the \$250-\$350 range including installation costs. Maintenance and law enforcement per year would range between \$150-\$250.