

White Mountain National Forest

Appendix H ROS Classes

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Classes

Listed below are brief descriptions of the settings and experiences for the various ROS classes. (Taken from “ROS Users Guide”)

Primitive ROS Class

Setting

The area is characterized by an essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is essentially free from evidence of human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use is not permitted.

Experience Characterization

There is an extremely high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk.

Semi-primitive Non-motorized ROS Class

Setting

The area is characterized by predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed with minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle because of some high use areas these characteristics cannot always be met, but they do represent a goal. Public motorized use is not permitted. In some management areas, the ROS objective may change from semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized on a seasonal basis.

Experience Characterization

There is a high, but not an extremely high, probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Semi-primitive Motorized ROS Class

Setting

It is characterized by predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use may be evident.

Experience Characterization

Moderate probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self reliance through the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk. There is an opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. There is also an opportunity to use motorized equipment while in the area.

Roaded Natural ROS Class

Setting

Area is characterized by predominantly natural appearing environments with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of human activity. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users, prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities.

Experience Characterization

There is about equal probability to experience affiliation with other user groups and for isolation from sights and sounds of humans. There is an opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities associated with more primitive types of recreation are not important. Practice and testing of outdoor skills might be important. Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized forms of recreation are possible.

Management Area Relationship

This ROS class is closely associated with state, county, and town roads as well as Forest Service “ Type III ” roads. It is usually described as a half mile either side of the road. Most of these roads, because of their visually sensitive nature are designated as Management Area 2.1. There are a few places in Management Area 3.1 where we use type III roads for timber operations that also meet the criteria for this class.

Rural ROS Class

Setting

This is characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities are often provided for special activities. Moderate densities are provided far away from developed sites. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking are available.

Experience Characterization

Probability for experiencing affiliation with individuals and groups is prevalent, as is the convenience of site and opportunities. These factors are generally more important than the setting or the physical environment. Opportunities for wildland challenges, risktaking, and testing of outdoor skills are generally unimportant except for specific activities like downhill skiing, for which challenge and risktaking are important elements.

Urban ROS Class

Setting

This is characterized by a substantially urbanized environment although the background may have natural appearing elements. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities. Sights and sounds of humans are predominant, large number of users can be expected, both on-site and in nearby areas. Facilities for highly intensified motor use and parking are available.

Experience Characterization

Probability for experiencing affiliation with individuals and groups is prevalent, as is the convenience of site and opportunities. Experiencing natural environments, having challenges and risks afforded by the natural environment and the use of outdoor skills are relatively unimportant.