Appendix C

Roadless Area Inventory and Wilderness Evaluation

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this appendix is to describe roadless areas and the criteria used in evaluating the capability, availability, and need of each area on the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) as potential wilderness areas. It includes a summary of each area's physical and biological attributes, resource uses, recreation opportunities, special features, and management considerations.

In June 2012, the Colorado Roadless Rule was finalized and it affects U.S. Forest Service (USFS) management of all Colorado Roadless Areas (CRAs) managed by the agency. This rule affords protective measures and restrictions on resource uses and development intended to protect the roadless character and values found within these areas. See the *Rulemaking for Colorado Roadless Areas Final Environmental Impact Statement* for detailed description of the rulemaking process, the nine roadless area characteristics, and prohibited/allowed activities and exceptions within CRAs.

The Colorado Roadless Rule and the CRAs identified therein supersede all previous roadless area inventories within Colorado. As part of the Colorado Roadless Rule, inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) or portions of IRAs that were not included as CRAs are no longer required to be managed to protect their roadless characteristics. However, SJNF IRA units and acreages as described in the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) remain in this appendix for comparative purposes, and because they form the rationale for the Agency's wilderness recommendations. Table C.1 shows the CRAs as defined in the Colorado Roadless Rule.

Table C.1: San Juan National Forest Colorado Roadless Areas

CRA ID#	Unit Name	Acreage
309	Baldy	20,343
304	Blackhawk Mountains	17,533
302	East Animas	16,854
310	Fish Creek	13,533
294	Florida River	5,720
291	Graham Park	17,808
295	HD Mountains	25,044
306	Hermosa	148,103
235	Lizard Head Adjacent	5,805
292	Piedra Area Adjacent	40,841
293	Runlett Park	5,615
315	Ryman	8,665
240	San Miguel	64,263
284	South San Juan Adjacent	34,899
305	Storm Peak	57,617
285	Treasure Mountain	22,500
286	Turkey Creek	25,300
320	Weminuche Adjacent	23,614
303	West Needles	6,881
287	Winter Hills/Serviceberry Mountain	5,115

The Colorado Roadless Rule is incorporated by reference in the LRMP, and it will be used to manage the 20 CRA units. The fact that the Colorado Roadless Rule has been approved since the scoping and draft phases of the LRMP, there are some inconsistencies in acreages and total number of units between the IRAs discussed in the Draft LRMP, and the CRAs discussed in the Final LRMP. The Colorado Roadless Rule is incorporated by reference in the LRMP/FEIS and this appendix. Of utmost importance is the fact that all CRAs will be managed under the Colorado Roadless Rule, while portions of IRAs not included in the CRAs will be managed under the LRMP direction. The Colorado Roadless Rule and its CRA inventory replaces all previous roadless area inventories in Colorado with regards to land management purposes.

Where the LRMP has more restrictive management requirements than the Colorado Roadless Rule, the LRMP requirements will supersede those of the Colorado Roadless Rule. It is important to note that Congressional designation of any national forest area as wilderness would supersede both the recommendations found within the LRMP and the 2012 Colorado Roadless Rule.

CHAPTER 2 – BACKGROUND

Previous Roadless Inventories and Wilderness Designations

Initial authority for roadless inventories and evaluations is based on the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law [PL] 88-577). In response to Section 3 of the Wilderness Act, the USFS began a review of National Forest System (NFS) roadless areas larger than 5,000 acres in 1972 called the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE I) to determine their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. RARE II, the second and final review process begun in 1977, resulted in a nationwide inventory of roadless areas.

As a result of RARE II, in 1979, the USFS made wilderness, wilderness study area (WSA), and non-wilderness recommendations on 24 roadless areas in the SJNF totaling 743,000 acres. The Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 (PL 96-560) designated 76,843 acres as wilderness and 93,100 additional acres as WSAs. The remaining acres (78% of the acreage) were released to multiple-use activities (USFS 1992:III-45).

The 1983 LRMP, amended in 1992, provided the management direction for the multiple-use strategy for managing the released roadless areas. The primary emphases were dispersed non-motorized recreation, management for wildlife indicator species, range management, and management for wood fiber production. A little less than half the roadless acres released was suited for timber production according to the LRMP.

Table C.2 summarizes the wilderness areas and the Piedra special management area previously designated by Congress in the SJNF.

Table C.2: Wilderness Areas and Piedra Area

Area	Current Acreage	Designation
Lizard Head wilderness	41,496	Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980
South San Juan wilderness	158,790	Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980
Weminuche wilderness	492,418	Wilderness Act of 1975, Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980, Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993
Piedra Area	63,250	Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993

Roadless Inventory

The LRMP revision process required a new and more accurate inventory to address ongoing roadless area management issues. The inventory criteria for roadless areas and the process used to evaluate these areas' wilderness capability, availability, and need are explained below (as established by Forest Service Handbook [FSH] 1909.12).

Each undeveloped area on the SJNF was identified during the inventory and marked for further roadless study if it met one or more of the following criteria:

- Contains 5,000 acres or more; or
- Contains less than 5,000 acres but:
  - Is manageable in its natural condition;
  - Is a self-contained ecosystem such as an island;
  - Is adjacent to an existing wilderness; or

- Does not contain improved roads maintained for travel by standard passenger-type vehicles (i.e., facilities for purposes of travel by vehicles greater than 50 inches in width).

Areas were excluded from the inventory if they contained:

- Classified roads;
- Timber activities from 1960 to present;
- Developed recreation sites (e.g., ski areas, campgrounds);
- Active oil and gas wells/facilities;
- Utility corridors;
- Other infrastructure (e.g., buildings, tanks, towers, water diversions such as dams or bridges, pipelines); or
- Grazing features (e.g., corrals, reservoirs with headgates).

After all the roaded areas were excluded, roadless area boundaries were delineated as shown in Figure C.1. As a result of the recent inventory, 19 roadless areas were identified totaling 558,282 acres. Various management activities (e.g., creation of new wilderness, timber sales and associated roads, oil and gas activities, and other developments) have changed the unroaded character of approximately 213,600 acres of the 743,000 acres of roadless areas identified in the RARE II process.

Potential Wilderness Analysis

FSH 1909.12 specifies that roadless areas be evaluated on the basis of the area's capability, availability, and the need for wilderness designation. Specific criteria used in the evaluation are described below.

Capability

FSH 1909.12-7.21 defines the capability of a potential wilderness as "the degree to which that area contains the basic characteristics that make it suitable for wilderness designation without regard to its availability for or need as wilderness." The following criteria were used to determine wilderness capability of each roadless area.

Environment

1) The degree to which the area provides visitors with the opportunity to gain a wide range of experiential benefits (e.g., solitude and serenity, spirit of adventure and awareness, sense of self-reliance); 2) the degree to which an area is natural and free from disturbance, and 3) the range of geological, biological, ecological strata, and other scientific, educational, historical values.

- Opportunity for solitude – low, moderate, high? Changing? Due to what? (considers human encounters, influence of outside development);
- Does the area provide a feeling of isolation or a sense that civilization has been left behind?
- Are there intrusions by "cherry stem" roads or private land inholdings?
- Can the traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area?
- Is the area a quiet place free from motorized noise?
- Challenge (degree to which area offers visitors opportunity to experience adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, or self-reliance, unusual or typical);
- Outdoor recreation opportunities (capability of providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation – e.g., camping, hunting, fishing, mountain-climbing, ski touring, canoeing, boating, river-rafting, backpacking, hiking, riding, photography; recreation setting – what is possible)
- Naturalness – (e.g., roads that break up forest? Remoteness? Human presence - previous grazing, ranching, timber, surrounding roads/noise/visual, fire, natural plant succession);
- Does the area prevent incidental damage to ecosystems?
- Is the species composition or succession appropriate for the area?
- Are invasive species present and, if so, are they increasing or dominant in the area?
- Does the area provide contiguous habitat for fish, wildlife, and flora?
- Is motorized access present, and if so, how prevalent is it in the area?
- Have natural processes been allowed to run their course without human intervention?

Special Features

Capability of providing outdoor education and scientific study, and abundant and varied wildlife.

- Education – any unique features? Research natural areas (RNAs)?
- Scenic features – e.g., views.

Manageability

Ability to manage as an enduring resource of wilderness, untrammeled by man, retaining primeval character; ability to protect and manage natural character (consider size, shape, juxtaposition to external influences, etc.).

- Size, shape;
- Boundaries;
- Avoids conflict with existing or potential public uses outside that might result in demands to allow nonconforming structures/activities in wilderness;
- Can readily/accurately describe, establish, recognize boundaries on ground;
- Conforms with terrain or other features that constitute a barrier to prohibited use;
- Acts as shield to protect wilderness from sights/sounds of civilization; and
- Provides adequate opportunity for access and traveler transfer facilities.

Availability

FSH 1909.12-7.22 states that the determination of availability is conditioned by "the value of and need for the wilderness resource compared to the value of and need for other resources." To be available for wilderness, the values of the wilderness resource, both tangible and intangible, should exceed the value of other resources that formal wilderness designation would preclude.

The USFS should have sufficient control to prevent development of irresolvable, incompatible uses that would lessen wilderness character and potential. The effect that wilderness designation and management is likely to have on adjacent lands is also a necessary consideration in evaluating availability.

Lands generally unavailable for wilderness include land with or needed for:

- Increased water production and/or additional on-site storage (need is vital to public necessity and installation or maintenance of improvements would be incompatible with wilderness);
- Wildlife management measures (wilderness designation would restrict or prevent necessary actions);
- Highly mineralized areas (the strategic or economic importance and controls necessary to maintain the wilderness character of the land would not be in the public interest);
- Unique or outstanding natural phenomena (general public access and special development to facilitate public enjoyment may be necessary and incompatible with wilderness);
- Clearly documented resource demands (e.g., timber or mineral production, developed recreation areas such as winter sports sites); and
- Contractual agreements (lands committed for use, purposes, or activities that are incompatible with the Wilderness Act).

The following criteria were used to determine wilderness availability of each roadless area:

- Value of and need for wilderness resource compared to other resources (current use, outputs, trends, potential future use), control over surface/subsurface of area (private land plans), effect on adjacent lands (transportation systems – access/transfer facility requirements costs and locations);
- Recreation – motorized, developed areas. What would need to be prohibited should it be wilderness (e.g., snowmobiling, mountain biking)? Level of uses, etc.;
- Wildlife – special habitat? Sensitive species? Winter range/migration;
- Water availability and use – snowfall, runoff;
- Livestock operations – which allotments, stocked or improvements?
- Timber – list past activities, suitable timber base, likelihood of being used;

- Minerals - drilling since 1992 or likely to occur;
- Cultural resources – past surveys and potential;
- Authorized and potential land uses – special uses, access to private inholdings, proposed uses;
- Management considerations – RNAs and Special Interest Areas (existing or proposed), effect that wilderness designation and management is likely to have on adjacent lands, motorized/mechanized use (where does it occur?), inholdings, fire (what limits would there be for prescribed fire, suppression or fuels management?), livestock grazing (limits on facilities), effects of limited trail maintenance, limits to address insect/disease, current inholding uses.

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? (Areas with vital need for increased water production/additional on-site storage, installation or maintenance of improvements);
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures?
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral-development potential? (Highly mineralized areas of strategic or economic importance);
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? (Natural phenomena demonstrating need for public access and special development);
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports?
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation?

Of the 19 areas, 18 were found capable and available for recommended wilderness (see Table C.4 below).

Need

Areas determined to be both capable and available for wilderness were evaluated for the need for wilderness.

The need for an area to be designated as wilderness is determined through “an analysis of the degree to which it contributes to the local and national distribution of wilderness” (FSH 1909.12-7.23). For an area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, there should be clear evidence of current or future public need for additional designated wilderness of those characteristics. Need is evaluated in terms of the geographic distribution of areas, representation of landforms and ecosystems, and the presence of wildlife expected to be visible in wilderness. The following criteria were used to determine the wilderness need of each roadless area.

Social Need

<u>Relation to Nearby Wilderness Areas and Urban Areas</u>
The SJNF manages three wilderness areas – the Lizard Head, Weminuche, and South San Juan– and the Piedra Area. These areas total almost 750,000 acres, or a third of the total acres in the SJNF.

There are over 3.3 million acres of designated wilderness in the state of Colorado, much of which is high elevation mountainous areas. The state’s largest wilderness area, Weminuche, is located in the SJNF.

The SJNF is located in the Four Corners area of the country in southwest Colorado. The region surrounding the SJNF includes southwest Colorado, northwest New Mexico, northeast Arizona, and southeast Utah. The largest population center surrounded by the SJNF is Durango, with a population of just under 14,000. Surrounding metropolitan areas in the nearby vicinity include Farmington, New Mexico (approximately 38,000), and the larger areas of Denver.

Table C.3 summarizes the wilderness opportunities available from these cities.

Table C.3: Acres of Wilderness Accessible from the Nearest Cities

City and State	2010 Population	Miles to Nearest SJNF Wilderness	Wilderness Areas within 100 miles*
Durango, CO	16,887	40 miles	Lizard Head (40 miles, SJNF) Weminuche (40 miles, SJNF) Mt. Sneffels (50 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests) South San Juan (57 miles, SJNF) Uncompahgre (59 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests) La Garita (63 miles, Gunnison and Rio Grande National Forests)
Farmington, NM	45,877	73 miles	Weminuche (73 miles, SJNF) Lizard Head (76 miles, SJNF) South San Juan (79 miles, SJNF) Mt. Sneffels (89 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests)
Grand Junction, CO	58,566	90 miles	Adobe Town WSA (27 miles, BLM) Raggeds (58 miles, Gunnison and White River National Forests) West Elk (63 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests) Maroon Bells-Snowmass (63 miles, Gunnison and White River National Forests) Flat Tops (78 miles, White River National Forest) Mt. Sneffels (81 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests) Uncompahgre (88 miles, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests) Lizard Head (90 miles, SJNF)
Albuquerque, NM	546,537	*	None
Moab, UT	5,046	82 miles	Adobe Town WSA (63 miles) Mt. Sneffels (81 miles, SJNF) Lizard Head (82 miles, SJNF)
Denver, CO	600,024	*	Mt. Evans (27 miles, Arapahoe and Pike National Forests) Indian Peaks (37 miles, Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests) Lost Creek (38 miles, Pike National Forest) Ptarmigan Peak (43 miles, White and Routte National Forests) Eagles Nest (53 miles, Arapahoe and White River National Forests) Buffalo Peaks (69 miles, Pike and San Isabel National Forests) Hunter-Fryingpan (78 miles, White River National Forest) Sarvis Creek (80 miles, Routt National Forest) Collegiate Peaks (84 miles, Gunnison National Forest) Mount Zirkel (98 miles, Routt National Forest)

* Other Wilderness areas are closer than those in the San Juan National Forest.

The Rocky Mountain Region of the USFS has approximately 4.8 million acres of designated wilderness within its jurisdiction (www.wilderness.net).

Current visitor use in SJNF wilderness includes the following:

- 36% of visitors to the three wilderness areas were considered local (within 2 hours of a wilderness trailhead). The other 64% were not local and came from 73 different zip codes.
- Trend in recreation visits in recent years has been fairly level with some areas remaining popular or growing such as the wilderness compartments with 14,000-foot peaks and other areas receiving less use. The recent drought and fires (2000–2004) lowered the overall visitor trend.
- The amount of visits has stayed between 80,000 and 120,000 for the past 10 years. Most of the visitors are white (97%) and are between 40 and 70 years old (70%), with 10% under 16 years old and the other 20% between 20 and 40 years old.
- Solitude can be measured by whether the visitor feels that the area is crowded. The average visitor to wilderness in the SJNF did not have a crowding concern (2.5 on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being crowded).

Population growth in the counties immediately surrounding the SJNF is estimated to increase anywhere from 1% to 2% over the next 25 years. For example, the La Plata County population, at 44,566 in 2000, is projected to almost double by the year 2030.

Social Considerations at a National Scale

Cordell and Teasley (1997) estimate in the 1994-5 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment that there were 40.4 million visits to wilderness in 1995. Visitor use of Wilderness Areas on National Forest System lands is forecasted to grow between 0.5% and 1.0% annually for the next 50 years

Southwest Colorado contains a wealth of opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation on other types of lands, such as non-wilderness lands on the SJNF or other adjacent forests such as the Uncompahgre or Rio Grande National Forests, and other federal lands such as Bureau of Land Management (BLM), state lands, and private lands.

Biological Need

Biological need evaluates the degree to which the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, and that may represent an ecotype under-represented in existing protected areas. Biological need consider such factors as the composition of plant and animal communities, the extent to which the area reflects ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area absent human intervention. A review of plant series found on NFS wilderness lands in the Rocky Mountain Region identified alpine and spruce-fir vegetation as covering a high percentage of wilderness lands.

Assumptions

The USFS (FSH 1909.12) makes the following assumptions when evaluating the need for wilderness:

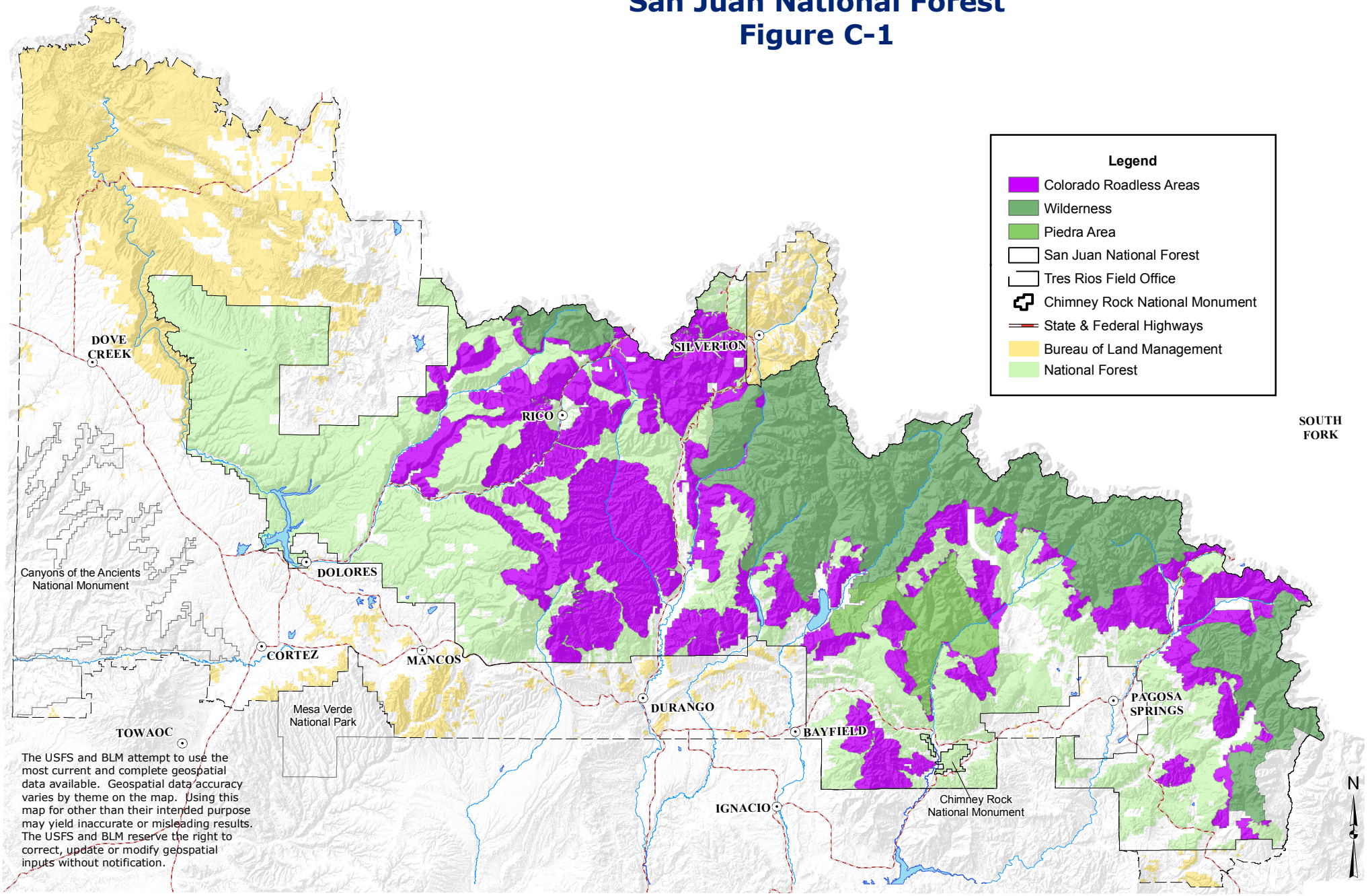
- Demand for wilderness increases with both an increasing population and a growing awareness of wilderness.
- Some undeveloped lands provide many opportunities for a primitive type of recreation outside wilderness. These lands are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase.
- Some visitor use that occurs in designated wildernesses is not dependent on the wilderness environment.
- Within social and biological limits, management may increase the capacity of established wildernesses to support human use without unacceptable depreciation of the wilderness resource.
- To survive, some biotic species and/or associations may require the environment found only in a wilderness.

Table C. 4 provides a summary of the areas that met the available and capable criteria in the Wilderness analysis. Figure C-1 illustrates the Colorado Roadless Areas on the San Juan National Forest.

Table C.4: Roadless Areas found Available and Capable for Wilderness

Roadless Area Name	Acres	Adjacent Wilderness	Availability	Capable
Baldy	20,343	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Blackhawk Mountain	17,533	Lizard Head	Available	Capable
East Animas	16,854	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Fish Creek	13,533	Lizard Head	Available	Capable
Florida River	5,720	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Graham Park	17,808	Weminuche	Available	Capable
HD Mountain	25,044	Piedra	Not available	Not Capable
Hermosa	148,103	Lizard Head, Weminuche	Available	Capable
Lizard Head Adjacent	5,805	Lizard Head	Available	Capable
Piedra Area Adjacent	40,841	Piedra	Available	Capable
Runlett Park	5,615	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Ryman	8,665	Lizard Head	Available	Capable
San Miguel	64,263	Lizard Head, Weminuche	Available	Capable
South San Juan Adjacent	34,899	South San Juan	Available	Capable
Storm Peak	57,617	Lizard Head	Available	Capable
Treasure Mountain	22,500	South San Juan	Available	Capable
Turkey Creek	25,300	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Weminuche Adjacent	22,614	Weminuche	Available	Capable
West Needle	6,881	Weminuche	Available	Capable
Winter Hills/Serviceberry Mountain	5,115	South San Juan	Available	Capable

Colorado Roadless Areas
San Juan National Forest
Figure C-1



The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

JER
NAD 83, Polyconic Projection
May 7, 2013

0 10 20 40 Miles

San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office
LRMP and FEIS

CHAPTER 3 – SITE-SPECIFIC EVALUATION DESCRIPTIONS

The following site-specific descriptions were developed by updating the 1992 RARE descriptions from the 1992 EIS, staff and public input, and FSH 1909.12.

BALDY (SJ309) (part of RARE II 2294) (CRA 309)

Overview

Acres: 20,343

District: Columbine

History: The RARE II study recommended that 15,200 acres of the 50,380-acre roadless area be added to the Weminuche wilderness, and those acres were added under the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980. The remaining 35,180 acres were released for management purposes other than wilderness. The segment not recommended for wilderness had a low rating because of non-conforming uses, structures, and mineral activity that reduced the natural quality of the area.

Location and vicinity: The area includes much of the eastern flank of Missionary Ridge to the private land along the Florida River.

Access: Road access within 0.25 mile of the roadless area includes Burnt Timber Road 595, the Red Rim Road 076, and the East Animas, which is a La Plata County road. NFS trails that access and serve the area are Missionary Ridge Trail 543, Youngs Canyon Trail 546, Haflin Canyon Trail 557, North Fork Shearer Creek Trail 558, Lime Mesa Trail 676, First Fork Red Creek Trail 727, and Stevens Creek Trail 728.

Physical description: The area includes Missionary Ridge and is the southern exposure of a northward-slanting incline extending from the low valleys east of Durango up to the high ridge tops of the hydrological divide between the Animas River drainage and the area drained by the Florida River.

The elevation range is between 6,800 feet near Durango up to 10,500 feet on Missionary Ridge.

Vegetation: The vegetative cover varies with elevation and exposure. The ponderosa pine type at the lower elevations gives way to the large band of mixed conifer. Above the tree line the spruce and fir give way to the alpine tundra.

Soils: Rock types of the exposed geology are as varied as the landform. The west side is primarily layers of sedimentary rocks. The Florida drainage contains some metamorphic and granites and the Vallecito is represented by mostly igneous outcrops and cliffs. Soils are variable in terms of depth, texture and eroding character.

Wildlife: The wide variety in vegetative cover for feeding and hiding provides outstanding habitat.

There are many small tributaries in this RARE II area, most without fishery potential.

Current uses: Dispersed recreational activities are limited to day-use and/or pass-through activities by persons on their way to the wilderness. Big-game hunting is probably the primary activity. Hiking and mountain biking along the Missionary Ridge Trail and day hiking in the Baldy area are popular.

Surroundings: NFS and private lands adjacent to the area are used for a wide variety of values. There are housing developments, recreation and tourist facilities, and all manner of forest resource uses such as timber harvest, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat improvement, and water-related activities.

Key Attractions: Missionary Ridge

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is moderate because of access and because of the shape of the areas and the numerous developments and activities along Lemon and Vallecito Reservoirs and the amount of road use on the adjacent areas. In some cases subdivision for home sites occurred right on the roadless area boundary.

Naturalness: Most of the Baldy area was cut during the turn of the century and has returned to a natural-looking area.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Most of the area is closed to all types of motorized recreation.

Special Features

Much of the area burned during the Missionary Ridge fire of 2002. This 70,000-acre fire changed the vegetative structure of the area.

Education: None known

Scenic features: None known.

Manageability

Size: 20,343

Boundaries: The area has no logical link to other roadless areas. Since it has a common boundary with the Weminuche wilderness there is potential to add more area to the Weminuche. However, no logical boundary could be established for management and protection of the wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Overview.

Wildlife: See Overview.

Water availability and use: None known.

Livestock operations: The area contains active grazing allotments and few facilities such as livestock ponds and fences.

Timber: There are 916 acres of suitable timber lands, some in the Willow Creek drainage (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The area contains geothermal possibilities. Locatable minerals potential is low to non-existent.

The area contains low potential for oil and gas or coal and there are no existing oil and gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Some cultural resource inventory has taken place in the area. Survey data from surrounding areas indicate that sites are likely to be found in open parks and meadows and along drainages and near permanent water sources. Potential cultural resource sites existing on steep slopes and in dense timber stands are unlikely. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no timber sales planned in the area. Nor are there plans for any subsequent recreation or domestic range developments. There are mechanical fuel projects within the area and more are planned.

Management considerations: None known.

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available as wilderness.

Need

The cover types represented in the Baldy roadless area are presented in Table C.5 below.

Table C.5: Baldy Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	107	21	17	797	19,089	0	20,032
%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	4.0%	95.3%	0.0%	100%

Nearby wilderness: The northern boundary of the East Animas roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known

Wildlife needs: None known.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

BLACKHAWK MOUNTAIN (SJ012) (RARE 2304) (CRA 304)

Overview

Acres: 17,533

District: Dolores

History: The RARE II process identified 17,750 acres of roadless area that were not recommended for wilderness because of the combined effects of developments (mining, unimproved four-wheel-drive roads, range improvements). The 1983 LRMP allocated approximately half the area to semi-primitive non-motorized recreational opportunity, and most of the remaining to increased water yield through timber harvest. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, 1,880 of the released acres were modified through subsequent resource management activities and 15,870 acres were to maintain their roadless character. The 2006 inventory increased the roadless acres to 17,533 through better geographic information system (GIS) mapping procedures.

Location and vicinity: This roadless area contains the area radiating out from the high ridge between Blackhawk Mountain, Section Point Peak, and Hermosa Peak. The area is located in both the Dolores and Animas Ranger Districts and is entirely within Dolores County. The western boundary is along the Dolores River. The north and south boundaries parallel Barlow and Scotch Creeks, respectively. The east boundary parallels the Hermosa Park Road.

Access: The area is accessible from Colorado Highway 145, the Barlow Creek Road 596, Hermosa Park Road 578, and Scotch Creek Road 550. The Colorado Trail 507 is the only NFS trail that accesses and serves the roadless area. There are non-system trails shown in the Rico town plan shown in this area.

Physical description: Numerous stream channels and ridges radiate in all directions from the high ridge formed by Blackhawk and Hermosa Peak. The area is highly dissected by the radiating stream channels.

The elevational range goes from 8,600 feet near Spruce Gulch to 12,681 feet on the summit of Blackhawk.

Vegetation: Vegetative overstory is the mixed conifer type with ponderosa-aspen mix in the lower elevations and aspen-white fir mix at the upper elevations. Depending on exposure there are pockets of Douglas-fir and spruce. Above the tree line on the three high peaks, the alpine tundra exists and is punctuated with cliffs and monolithic rock outcrops.

Soils: Parent geology is made up of sedimentary layers with shallow to deep, unstable soils.

Wildlife: Wildlife species inhabiting the area are typical of wildlife found in the southern Rocky Mountains. There is a good animal species mix because of the varied habitats created by the variety of understory vegetation. Lynx are known to exist in the area.

Current uses: The primary dispersed recreation use is hunting, hiking, and scenery viewing. The northern half and portions around Rico are open to cross-country motorized use. The Deadwood, Circle, and McJunkin non-system trails are used for non-motorized use. Winter use includes snowmobiling in the open area, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing. Big-game outfitters use this area.

Surroundings: NFS lands surrounding the roadless area provide a variety of public values. The areas in the river and stream bottoms provide a scenic backdrop for recreation travel along the surrounding roads. The mining district around Rico is composed of many mining patents that could be reactivated in future years. Some summer home development is occurring on other private lands.

Key attractions: Blackhawk Mountain

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is minimal because of the surrounding roads and the mining and townsite activity at Rico.

Naturalness: The area contains developments in the form of unimproved four-wheel-drive roads, mining, and range improvements.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Big-game hunting, outfitting, unimproved four-wheel-drive roads, snowmobiling, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing.

Special Features

Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Along Colorado Highway 145 is a utility corridor and dispersed parking for fishing and camping.

Size: 17,533

Boundaries: The area cannot be linked to other roadless areas or classified wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Current uses above.

Wildlife: Lynx are known to use the area.

Water availability and use: No known issues

Livestock operations: The area contains active grazing allotments and few facilities such as livestock ponds and fences.

Timber: There are 1,049 acres of suitable timber lands in the roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials)

Minerals: A small portion of the area, approximately 500 acres around Rico, is listed by the Department of Energy as very important for uranium. The area contains known quantities of hard rock minerals and geothermal potential. There presently is no known coal potential within the IRA.

Oil and gas potential is low. There are no existing oil or gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials.)

Cultural resources: Cultural resource inventories have been conducted in some parts of the area. Some sites have been recorded during these inventories that include isolated finds, lithic scatters, and historic mining features. There is a moderate to high likelihood of additional sites occurring in open parks, meadows, and along stream courses. The likelihood of additional finds on the steep slopes and in the dense timber stands is low. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: Mining claims along with associated road construction or development of patented lands could compromise parts of the area.

Management considerations: Rico watershed and pipeline could impact the area.

<u>Availability Questions</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Yes, the Rico watershed and pipeline could impact the area.*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Yes*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *Not known*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The northwestern tip of the Blackhawk Mountain roadless area is separated from the Lizard Head wilderness area by Colorado Highway 145.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Blackhawk Mountain roadless area are presented in Table C.6 below.

Table C.6: Blackhawk Mountain Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	2,637	21	0	1,157	13,712	6	17,533
%	15.0%	0.1%	0.0%	6.6%	78.2%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: Lynx are known to use this area

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Recreation use, including mechanized travel, would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive motorized character of the area. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

The area would be manageable as wilderness.

EAST ANIMAS (SJ010) (RARE 2302) (CRA 302)

Overview

Acres: 16,854

District: Columbine

History: RARE II recommended addition of 4,380 acres of the 18,220-acre roadless area to the Weminuche wilderness. The recommended area was added to the Weminuche by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980. The remaining acres were released to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, wildlife management, and wood fiber production under the 1983 LRMP. The Missionary Ridge fire burned the southern portion in Bear Creek.

Location and vicinity: The northern boundary abuts the Weminuche wilderness. This roadless area lies between the Missionary Ridge Road and the private and NFS lands along the Animas River. Its western and northern boundary is in the Animas River corridor and its eastern boundary flanks the numerous timber sales on the slopes of Missionary Ridge.

Access: Road access to the area is via Missionary Ridge Road 682. Canyon Creek Trail is the only trail to access the area.

Physical description: The area is characterized by the steep slopes rising out of the Animas River Canyon, which is part of the overall slopes leading to the top of Mountain View Crest. Once out of the steep canyon walls, the area has a more moderate and constant rise in elevation. The area is highly dissected by numerous streams that are tributaries to the Animas River.

The elevational range is from 7,000 feet on Carson Creek up to 12,000 feet on the slopes leading up to Mountain View Crest.

Vegetation: The overstory vegetation cover is primarily mixed conifer with some ponderosa pine types in the lower elevations along the Animas River and spruce and fir in the areas approaching the tree line. Extensive aspen stands are found on the east side of the boundary.

Soils: The geology is displayed by numerous rock outcrops and rock cliffs. They are a mix of sedimentary and igneous origin. There is a wide variety of soil types, most of which are fairly unstable on the steeper slopes.

Wildlife: The area is rich in wildlife because of the wide variety of vegetation ranging from the dry ponderosa/Gambel oak type up through the aspen, spruce, and fir. Tank and Canyon Creek have a fair to good fishery. Lynx are a known threatened species inhabiting the area.

Current uses: Dispersed recreational use of the area is limited to hunting and hiking. The area does provide a scenic backdrop for viewing from U.S. Highway 550, the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, and recreation traffic along the Missionary Ridge Road.

Surroundings: NFS lands to the east of the roadless area have experienced moderately heavy timber harvests in the past. The area also provides some livestock grazing. Wilderness is adjacent to the north. The Animas River corridor, to the west, is managed for dispersed recreation and scenic quality. The major feature of the corridor is the narrow gauge railroad and whitewater boating on the Animas River.

Key attractions: Animas River, Grass Hopper Creek, and Tank Mesa.

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: Opportunities for solitude exist high away from the Missionary Ridge Road and not during hunting season since very few people utilize the steep slopes leading out of the Animas River Canyon.

Naturalness: The area is mostly natural with a few livestock projects, including fences, pipelines, and stock ponds. These are minor intrusions.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Dispersed recreational use is limited to hunting and hiking.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: Provides a scenic backdrop for viewing from U.S. Highway 550, the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, and recreation traffic along the Missionary Ridge Road.

Manageability

Size: The area is large enough to be managed as wilderness and is adjacent to the much larger Weminuche wilderness.

Boundaries: The area cannot be logically connected to other roadless areas but could be added to the Weminuche wilderness.

Conclusions: The area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: The area is closed to all summer motorized-vehicle use and rocky topography restricts most winter snowmobile use to existing roads outside the area's boundary. Currently snowmobiling happens in Tank, Bear Creek, Canyon Creek, and on Mountain View Crest there are snowmobiling intrusions into the wilderness.

Wildlife: Lynx are a known threatened species inhabiting the area.

Water availability and use: Livestock water facilities in the form of pipelines and stock ponds. These are minor intrusions.

Livestock operations: The area is in an active livestock allotment.

Timber: The area contains 2,364 acres of suitable timber lands (update per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials). These suitable stands include aspen stands near the Missionary Ridge Road.

Minerals: Potential mineral resources, both locatable and leasable, are not considered significant and no exploratory activities are foreseen at this time.

There are currently no oil and gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Very little cultural resource inventory has been done in the area and no sites have been recorded. Based on data from surveys in surrounding areas, there is a moderate to high likelihood that sites exist along drainages and in open parks and meadows. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Historic features include cabins and a sawmill between Bear Creek and Canyon creek.

Authorized and potential land uses: There is limited potential for wildlife habitat improvement through prescribed burning, but no specific projects have been identified. There are no planned developed recreation sites. Roading of this area could occur because of unplanned mineral activity and oil, gas or coal leasing. Prescribed burn is planned between Bear Creek and Canyon Creek.

Management considerations: Private inholding, extensive adjacent road network.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The northern boundary abuts the Weminuche wilderness.

The cover types represented in the East Animas roadless area are presented in Table C.7 below.

Table C.7: East Animas Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	979	395	14	1,232	14,227	17	16,864
%	5.8%	2.3%	0.1%	7.3%	84.4%	0.1%	100.0%

Limited representation cover types: None known

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Proposed management under all alternatives would protect wilderness characteristics while allowing for additional management tools not allowed under wilderness protection. Recreation use including allowing mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

The area is manageable as wilderness due to its adjacency the Weminuche wilderness, although the southern portion has a significant inholding and extensive adjacent road network that may hamper management of that portion as wilderness.

FISH CREEK (SJ001) (not included in RARE II) (CRA 310)

Overview

Acres: 13,533

District: Dolores

History: The Fish Creek roadless area was not identified in previous roadless inventories.

Location and vicinity: This area is located in the northeastern part of the Dolores District, in Dolores County, southwest of, but not adjacent to, the Lizard Head wilderness. It is bounded by Little Fish Creek to the west and Fish Creek to the east; the area includes both drainages, spanning from Black Mesa south to the confluence of the two rivers.

Access: Points along the following roads are within 0.25 mile or less of the roadless area boundary: Forest Roads 452, 403, 611A, 404, 534, and 64.

Physical description: The area includes a variety of topographic features, including mountain peaks, mesas, deep canyons, steep valley slopes, and rolling high country. It is dissected by Fish Creek and Groundhog Creek, which are tributary to the West Dolores River. The area is characterized by Nipple Mountain, Fish Creek state wildlife area, and Willow Creek Divide. The area is bounded on the west by the SJNF boundary and on the east by the west Dolores Road.

The area's elevation ranges from 7,400 feet near the West Dolores River up to 9,763 feet at the Nipple Mountain summit.

Vegetation: The lowest elevations are covered with willow-dominated riparian zones and several small stands of old growth ponderosa pine. Aspen dominates the south-facing slopes while spruce-fir forests populate north-facing slopes.

Soils: Geology of the area is manifested by rock outcrops and cliffs of both sedimentary and igneous origin. The soil types vary widely and run the full range of instability from stable and shallow to deep.

Wildlife: Wildlife species found in this area are typical of those found in the southern Rocky Mountains. The large number of vegetative types has created an extremely diverse habitat. There are no known threatened or endangered species in the area.

Current uses: The Fish Creek Trail offers hiking, horseback-riding, hunting, and fishing. The western boundary is open to motorized use; part of it is F area down from Groundhog Creek. The Goble Creek area is open to snowmobiling and only the Fish Creek drainage is closed year-long to motorized use.

Surroundings: All immediate adjacent lands surrounding the Fish Creek roadless area are NFS lands. The SJNF boundary is located just over a mile west of the area and is bounded by private lands. Uncompahgre National Forest lands are 1 to 3 miles to the north of the roadless area. Lizard Head

wilderness is a few miles from the northeastern boundary of the Fish Creek roadless area. Lands south of the roadless area are a part of the SJNF. The Fish Creek state wildlife area is located less than a mile southwest of the roadless area.

Key Attractions: Fish Creek Trail

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: Opportunities are low for most of the area, except on the Fish Creek Trail, due to snowmobiles, hunting, and sights and sounds from private lands.

Naturalness: The spruce forests of Black Mesa have been extensively clearcut above the stream valley rims. However, these clearcuts on Black Mesa and Willow Divide form the boundary of the roadless area. Livestock fences in this IRA are fairly intrusive in areas.

Challenge: Water users on Groundhog Creek, private lands on the west side of the IRA.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: The Fish Creek Trail (Forest Service Trail 647) begins in the Fish Creek state wildlife area before it enters SJNF lands, ending at the Black Mesa Road. Goble Trail (Forest Service Trail 740) is a non-motorized trail except for winter snowmobile. The trail is open to horses, hikers, and mountain bikes. Trout fishing occurs in Fish Creek and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has created a fish habitat on the lower end.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Size: 13,533

Boundaries: The roadless area cannot be combined with any other roadless area. It is separated from the Lizard Head wilderness by Forest Road 611.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: Some winter snowmobile use in Willow Divide and Nipple Mountain. Unauthorized all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use occurs in the area. The IRA is used for pack trips for fishing and hunting big-game outfitters. Overall levels of recreation use are low off the main trails.

Wildlife: Fish Creek IRA has several major elk migration corridors between winter range to the southwest and summer range around the Lizard Head wilderness and contains elk calving areas.

Water availability and use: Groundhog Creek is the major outlet for Groundhog Reservoir. Fish Creek Trail has a ditch on NFS lands. The western side is littered with stock ponds and reservoirs.

Livestock operations: The area has livestock grazing use with numerous fences and stock ponds and reservoirs on the western side, but the only range developments consist of a couple of fences. There is a brush fence on the southern boundary of Mavreeso.

Timber: All previous timber sales were removed in the new inventory.

Minerals: The area lies outside known mineral-producing regions and has low potential for economic mineralization. The IRA has moderate oil and gas potential and low potential for coal. No other saleable minerals known in the area.

Cultural resources: None known

Authorized and potential land uses: None known

Management considerations: None known

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Yes, ditches and Groundhog Creek are used to transport water held in Ground Hog Reservoir.*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Yes, moderate potential for oil and gas.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available as wilderness.

Need

Nearby wilderness: Lizard Head wilderness is a few miles northeast of the Fish Creek roadless area.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Fish Creek roadless area are presented in Table C.8 below.

Table C 8: Fish Creek Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	217	307	0	2718	10292	3	13,537
%	1.6%	2.3%	0.0%	20.1%	76.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive motorized character of the area.

The area would be difficult to manage as wilderness due to its shape (narrow neck, high perimeter/core area ratio), surrounding developments, and adjacent private and state lands.

FLORIDA RIVER (SJ011) (part of RARE II 2294) (CRA 294)

Overview

Acres: 5,720

District: Columbine

History: The RARE II study recommended that 15,200 acres of the 50,380-acre roadless area be added to the Weminuche wilderness and those acres were added to the Weminuche wilderness under the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980. The remaining 35,180 acres were released for management purposes other than wilderness. The segment not recommended for wilderness had a low rating because of non-conforming uses, structures, and mineral activity that reduced the natural quality of the area.

Location and vicinity: The area includes much of the eastern flank of Missionary Ridge to the private land along the Florida River.

Access: Road access within 0.25 mile of the roadless area includes Vallecito Road 600, East Florida Road 597, and Florida Road 596. NFS trails that access and serve the area include Endlich Mesa Trail 534.

Physical description: The area is characterized by U-shaped valleys of the Florida and Vallecito Rivers.

The elevation range is between 8,200 feet near Lemon Reservoir up to 12,740 feet at the summit of Miller Mountain.

Vegetation: The vegetative cover varies with elevation and exposure and is primarily a large band of mixed conifer. At the tree line the spruce and fir give way to the alpine tundra.

Soils: Rock types of the exposed geology are as varied as the landform. The west side is primarily layers of sedimentary rocks. The Florida drainage contains some metamorphic rock and granites and the Vallecito is represented by mostly igneous outcrops and cliffs. Soils are variable in terms of depth, texture, and eroding character.

Wildlife: The wide variety in vegetative cover for feeding and hiding provides outstanding habitat. Lynx, a threatened species, have been released in the area.

There are many small tributaries in this RARE II area, most without fishery potential. The inlet to Stump Lake was rehabilitated in 1987 as a fishery improvement project to try and maintain winter inflow. Success has been poor and future projects may be needed.

Current uses: Dispersed recreational activities are limited to day-use and/or pass-through activities by persons on their way to the wilderness. Big-game hunting is probably the primary activity.

Surroundings: NFS and private lands adjacent to the area are used for a wide variety of values. There are housing developments, recreation and tourist facilities, and all manner of forest resource uses such as timber harvest, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat improvement, and water-related activities.

Key attractions: Outstanding wildlife appreciation opportunities.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is moderate because of access and because of the shape of the areas, the numerous developments and activities along Lemon and Vallecito Reservoirs and the amount of road use on the adjacent areas. In some cases subdivision for home sites occurred right on the roadless area boundary.

Naturalness: While some of the area was cut during the turn of the century, it has returned to a natural-looking area.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Most of the area is closed to all types of motorized recreation. Only areas around Miller Mountain on the north end are open to motorized uses.

Special Features

Much of the area burned during the Missionary Ridge fire of 2002. This 70,000-acre fire changed the vegetative structure of the area.

Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Size: 5,720

Boundaries: The area has no logical link to other roadless areas. Since it has a common boundary with the Weminuche wilderness there is potential to add more area to the Weminuche. However, no logical boundary could be established for management and protection of the wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Overview above.

Wildlife: See Overview above.

Water availability and use: None known

Livestock operations: The area contains active grazing allotments and few facilities such as livestock ponds and fences.

Timber: There are 916 acres of suitable timber lands, some in the Willow Creek drainage (per December 2005 Governors roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The area contains geothermal possibilities. Locatable minerals potential is low to nonexistent.

The area contains low potential for oil and gas potential or coal and there are no existing oil and gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Some cultural resource inventory has taken place in the area. Survey data from surrounding areas indicates that sites are likely to be found in open parks and meadows and along drainages and near permanent water sources. Potential cultural resource sites existing on steep slopes and in dense timber stands are unlikely. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no timber sales planned in the area, nor are there plans for any subsequent recreation or domestic range developments. There are mechanical fuel projects within the area and more are planned.

Management considerations: None known

<u>Availability Questions:</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The northern boundary of the Florida roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Florida River roadless area are presented in Table C.9 below.

Table C.9: Florida River Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	98	73	0	27	4,996	532	5,726
%	1.7%	1.3%	0.0%	0.5%	87.3%	9.3%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

Management as wilderness would be complicated by the area's convoluted boundary, narrow "necks" of roadless land, and its adjacency to roaded areas and private property.

GRAHAM PARK (SJ005) (RARE II 2291) (CRA 291)

Overview

Acres: 17,808

District: Pagosa

History: The RARE II process identified 12,090 roadless acres that were not recommended for wilderness because of the timber values and the absence of a logical manageable boundary. This area had the lowest wilderness attributes rating on the SJNF and was in the lower 50% in the region. The 1983 LRMP allocated the area to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation and 1,160 acres to timber production.

Location and vicinity: The Graham Park roadless area is a dipper-shaped area between the old Mosca timber sale area and the Weminuche wilderness. It is located in Hinsdale County in the north-central portion of the Pagosa District. Its top side is a common boundary with the Weminuche wilderness along the ridge between Granite and Graham Peaks. The eastern boundary is the private land in the Weminuche Valley and the south boundary is along the clearcut areas of the historic Mosca timber sale area.

Access: Roaded access to the area is via Piedra Road 631. The following NFS trails access and serve the area: Pine-Piedra Trail 524, Falls Creek Trail 673, Shaw Creek Trail 584, and Little Sand Creek Trail 591.

Physical description: The area's physical characteristics were formed by the high ridge separating the Weminuche drainage from the upper Los Pinos River drainage. This area covers the upper one-fourth of the slope between the Piedra River and the hydrological divide with the Pine River. Being near the top of the ridge, it is moderately dissected by cross-drainages and has three named streams draining the dipper portion of the area. They are Bear Creek, Shaw Creek and Falls Creek, which are tributaries to Weminuche Creek. The handle portion of the area contains the headwaters of Mosca Creek, Sand Creek, and the west and east forks of Coldwater Creek.

Elevational differences are between 8,200 feet in the Weminuche Valley and 12,531 feet on the summit of Graham Peak.

Vegetation: Although the exposure of the area is generally south and east, the dissecting stream channels have resulted in some north and southwest exposures. However, the change in exposure is not sufficient to create a large variety in overstory vegetation. The area has some mixed conifer types on the slopes rising out of the Weminuche Valley floor. Once the bench is reached in the Bear, Shaw, and Falls creeks area the timber type is in uniform stands of spruce and fir. Above the tree line on the higher peaks the alpine tundra is mixed with rock cliffs and talus slopes. One distinguishing characteristic is the number of open wet or riparian meadows along the upper reaches of Shaw and Falls Creeks. This unusual mosaic provides excellent elk summer habitat.

Soils: Geology of the area ranges from sedimentary outcrops in the Weminuche Valley to granitic formations that form the major peak along the Weminuche wilderness boundary. Soils vary.

Wildlife: Wildlife species inhabiting the area are typical of those found in the rest of the San Juan Mountains. In addition to the typical species there are Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep that frequent the areas around the higher peaks. The wet meadows in the Shaw and Falls Creek drainages are important elk summer ranges. The outstanding wildlife feature is the elk use of the Shaw and Falls Creek drainage areas for calving.

There are no known threatened or endangered species in the area. Suitable habitat for the Canada lynx exists in the IRA. Lynx have been released in a nearby area through the CPW lynx augmentation program.

Currently there are efforts to recover Colorado river cutthroat trout.

Current uses: Recreational use of the area is mostly hunting. Some trail use occurs by horse packers and backpackers using system and non-system trails for hunting. Recreation use is very low outside the hunting season. The area is a prime spot for observing wildlife. The area is closed to summer motorized travel, but snowmobiling is permitted off FDR 631 in winter.

Surroundings: The eastern boundary is the private land in the Weminuche Valley and the south boundary is along the clearcut areas of the historic Mosca timber sale area. Use of lands surrounding the area is varied. On the north and west is legislated wilderness, on the east is private ranching and on the south and southwest are the old Mosca clearcuts with their associated road system.

Key attractions: Views of the Weminuche wilderness

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: Low to moderate. The area slopes down to intensive development (clearcuts, roads), which can be seen from much of the area; however, recreation use is low except during hunting season.

Naturalness: 1980s timber harvest and road construction.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: See Overview.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: See Overview.

Manageability

Size: 17,808

Boundaries: No known issues

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Overview.

Wildlife: See Overview.

Water availability and use: Fens are located in the area.

Livestock operations: The current level of livestock grazing is expected to continue with only the ranching economy causing any major changes. Existing range improvements will be maintained.

Timber: One timber sale has affected the area since the RARE II study and analysis. The Mosca timber sale area modified the roadless character on approximately 920 acres. The 1.8 miles of new road to connect the scattered cutting blocks also impacted another 80 acres.

In total, there are 3,225 acres of suitable timber lands (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: Previous energy resource assessments show that no commercial potential exists for oil and gas, locatable, and coal on the entire area. No known leases are in effect at this time.

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource surveys in the area resulted in the location of only a few sites of isolated artifacts and lithic scatter. These sites were located in meadows, thus indicating likely site locations in the upper Piedra Valley. There is a moderate likelihood of sites being present in meadows and along drainages. The likelihood is lower for the steep slopes and dense tree-covered areas. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are two outfitters and guides in the area with two camps and a potential Sno-Cat skiing proposal. Although Falls and Bear Creeks contain fish, it is doubtful whether any fisheries habitat improvement will occur because of difficult access.

Management considerations: None known.

<u>Availability Questions</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Graham Park roadless is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness along its western and northern boundaries.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The wet meadows and fens are an uncommon feature that enhances the higher, rocky slopes of the adjacent Weminuche wilderness. The cover types represented in the Graham Park roadless area are presented in Table C.10 below.

Table C.10: Graham Park Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	986	834	32	737	15,209	10	17,808
%	5.5%	4.7%	0.2%	4.1%	85.4%	0.1%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

HD MOUNTAIN (SJ009) (RARE II 2295) (CRA 295)

Overview

Acres: 25,044

District: Columbine

History: The RARE II process recommended that the entire 20,010 acres of the roadless area remain non-wilderness. The 1983 LRMP allocated 2,800 acres to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, 4,570 acres to semi-primitive motorized recreation, and 12,640 acres to wildlife management emphasis. The HD Mountains are covered under the Northern San Juan Basin EIS (USFS 2007), which addressed oil and gas development within the area.

The RARE II wilderness attribute rating was ranked in the lower 40% of the SJNF's areas and about midway in the regional areas. In total, 460 acres have been modified by management activities. Roads, pipelines, and drill sites for the gas field development will modify another 1,000 acres. At the conclusion of the 1992 planning period approximately 18,550 acres (29 square miles) were to remain roadless but the development of the gas field continues.

Location and vicinity: The HD Mountain roadless area is located to the southeast of Bayfield. It is partially located in four townships in both Archuleta and La Plata Counties. The area is located south of U.S. Highway 160. The area has an irregular boundary that generally inscribes the mountain ridge that separates the many old roads and timber-cutting areas on the eastern and western flanks of the HD Mountains.

Access: Access roads leading to the area include Sauls Creek 608, Lange Canyon 137, Fosset Gulch 613, Turkey Creek Road 615a, Radio Tower Road 756, ATT Road 743, and Spring Creek 537. The only NFS trail serving the area is the Pine-Piedra Trail 524.

Physical description: A 10-mile-long north-south low mountain range made up of individual peaks, mesas, and questas characterizes this roadless area. It is a transition area between the geomorphology of the Colorado Plateau and the higher Rocky Mountains along the Continental Divide.

Elevation range is between 6,500 feet in Skull Creek and 8,936 feet on Pargin Mountain.

Vegetation: Vegetation lies in a vegetative transition zone between the pinyon-juniper type and the ponderosa pine type. Pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine, and mixed conifer dominate the southern exposures and ponderosa pine is present on the northerly exposures. Large Gambel oak stands are

along the western side of the area. Gambel oak is intermingled beneath the ponderosa pine and at the lower elevations of the pinyon-juniper type. There are a large number of open grass meadows in the drainage bottoms. On the northern exposures there are some pockets of Douglas-fir. Old growth ponderosa pine stands are in Turkey Creek and Ignacio Canyon.

Soils: Major geology of the area is formed by sedimentary rock formations and their resulting soil types. Many of the soils are considered poor and highly susceptible to erosion. Many are of shale origin and have a moderate to high shrink characteristic and are of low strength.

Wildlife: During the winter months, elk migrate into the area because of the large amount of winter range provided by the open grassy meadows. There is also a fair number of cavity-nesting birds because of the number of old ponderosa pine snags in the area.

The area has suitable habitat for the peregrine falcon and the Mexican spotted owl, a species is listed as threatened both federally and by the State of Colorado.

Current uses: Although a full spectrum of recreational activities exists in the area such as hiking, mountain-biking, horseback riding, and ATV use due to the area's location near Bayfield, recreation use is considered moderate because of the absence of water, vegetation, and terrain. Coalbed methane extraction, private lands holdings, and cattle grazing are in the area

Surroundings: The use of NFS lands surrounding this roadless area has long provided for multiple-use management of timber, range, wildlife, and recreation resources.

Key attractions: Turkey Creek, Ignacio Canyon, and Point Stewart**.**

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is available within parts of the area, but in some areas solitude is lacking because of the visual and audible impact of the gas-field production areas and related traffic on the surrounding roads. If all approved gas wells were constructed it would impact opportunities for solitude within the IRA.

Naturalness: The largest impact to the roadless character of the area is the current leasing and current and future drilling activity associated with the gas wells in this region of the San Juan Basin. Once the approved wells are drilled, this activity will change the natural setting of much of the IRA area. A small portion of the Lange Canyon timber sale has modified the roadless character of the area on approximately 80 acres. There were no new roads constructed for this 1981 sale. Several range fences cross the area and small stock ponds can be found in the lower, open draws on the area's periphery.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Hiking, mountain-biking, horseback riding, hunting, and ATV use.

Special Features

Education: Old growth ponderosa pine stands in Ignacio Canyon have been identified as a potential RNA.

Scenic features: Pargin Mountain.

Manageability

Size: 25,044

Boundaries: The roadless area cannot be linked to another roadless or wilderness area.

Conclusions: This area is not capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: Dispersed recreation in the form of hiking, hunting, mountain biking, and ATVs.

Wildlife: The area has suitable habitat for the peregrine falcon and the Mexican spotted owl.

Water availability and use: Springs and small stock ponds are found in the area.

Livestock operations: Grazing allotments cover much of the HD Mountains, although the utilized area is relatively small because of topographic limitations.

Timber: There are no planned timber sales within the area. There are 3,638 acres of suitable timber lands within the area (update per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials), including portions of Ignacio Creek. However, topography limits utility of the area for timber management.

Minerals: Coalbed methane, natural gas, and other hydrocarbons offer the largest substantial extractive resource.

In 1978 the Department of Energy listed the entire area as being highly important for oil and gas. The Colorado Geological Survey also pointed out high oil and gas potential, as well as coalbeds underlying the entire area. These early studies are corroborated by the large interest in leasing and drilling expressed today.

The largest impact to the roadless character of the area is the leasing and current and future drilling activity associated with the gas wells in this region of the San Juan Basin. Currently, there have been two wells drilled on the boundary and four drilled in the interior, resulting in approximately 2.5 miles of road construction. The road construction has modified the roadless character of approximately 380 acres along the roads. As of December 2005, 17,388 acres (88%) within the HD Mountain roadless area are leased for oil and gas development.

The 2007 Northern San Juan Basin Record of Decision approved 138 gas wells within the area.

Cultural resources: Cultural resource inventories conducted in the area have identified a large number of properties that include isolated finds, Archaic campsites, lithic and ceramic scatters, habitations with subsurface architecture, and a large number of historic features relating to the logging and ranching era. Some of these properties will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There is a high probability of finds on the ridge or mesa tops, in the meadows, and along the intermittent stream drainages. They are less likely to be found on the steep wooded slopes. Although this area is adjacent to the Southern Ute Reservation, tribal officials have not indicated any areas of interest under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments in the area. The large impact will be the continued drilling for gas and oil for valid existing leases. Gas well development is expected in the area per the 2007 EIS Record of Decision.

Fuel/Forest restoration projects with both mechanical treatment and prescribed fire are ongoing and proposed in the area.

Management considerations: Authorized oil and gas leases have a direct impact on availability of the IRA.

<u>Availability Questions:</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Yes*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*

- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *Yes, natural gas is a strategic energy resource located within the area.*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Yes, most of the area is leased for oil and gas.*

Conclusions: The HD Mountains IRA is not available for wilderness designation.

Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

Need

Conclusions: Lack of availability for wilderness precludes the need for this section.

HERMOSA (SJ014) (RARE 2306) (CRA 306)

Overview

Acres: 148,102

District: Dolores/Columbine

History: The RARE II process identified 146,105 acres that were not recommended as wilderness because of mineral activities and recreational needs. There was a strong public sentiment to keep the area roadless but not stop historic, high-demand recreational activities such as motorcycling and mountain biking. The 1983 LRMP allocated the area mainly to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity. The remaining portion of the area that had very low wilderness attributes and was allocated under the 1983 LRMP to a variety of management prescriptions, including semi-primitive motorized recreation, roaded recreation in a rural setting, wildlife, livestock use, and wood fiber production. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, of the 146,105 released acres, 3,720 acres had been modified through resource management practices and 142,385 acres were roadless. The Hermosa drainage had a high wilderness attributes rating and met all other criteria for wilderness. No activities that would change or modify the roadless character had occurred in the main Hermosa drainage, with the exception of the Dutch Creek Area, which had some timber harvest occurring and was thus found unsuitable at that time. The 2006 inventory increased the roadless acres to 148,139 by combining the Hermosa and La Plata roadless areas and using better GIS mapping procedures.

Location and vicinity: This is the largest of the roadless areas on the SJNF. The area is located in portions of 12 townships in the central part of the SJNF. Most of the area is in La Plata County, but the western portions fall into Montezuma County. The irregular boundary is caused by roads that penetrate into the general area and deep narrow valleys like Bear Creek that have remained unroaded. The area is totally surrounded by NFS lands and private lands in the corridor along U.S. Highway 550. The nearest existing designated wilderness is located across the Animas River valley.

Access: The area is within 0.25 mile or closer to 13 NFS roads, U.S. Highway 550, several four-wheel-drive roads, and one private mining road. Some of the roads actually penetrate the existing RARE II boundary. The area is served by the following major NFS trails: Hermosa Creek 514, Little Elk 515, Goulding Creek 517, Jones Creek 518, Big Bend 519, Corral Draw 521, Neglected Trail 547, South Fork 549, Highline 520, Grindstone 658, Bear Creek 607, Little Bear 609, Gold Run 618, Rough Canyon, Grindstone Loop, Rio Lado 736, Sharkstooth, West Mancos 621, Morrison, Owens Basin, Dutch Creek, Salt Creek, Big Lick, Clear Creek, and Pinkerton-Flagstaff. The Rico/Silverton toll road is located in the northern part of the roadless, historical feature. The IRA contains a portion of the Colorado Trail, which is a system of trails connecting Durango with Denver.

Physical description: The area's physical characteristics range from flat to vertical cliffs and alpine peaks. The IRA has numerous perennial and intermittent stream drainages that flow into Hermosa Creek and whose canyons dissect the surface of the area.

The elevation ranges between 7,000 and 13,200 feet.

Vegetation: The wide range of elevations, slope aspects, and soil and geology types has resulted in an extremely complex mixture of plant communities. At the lower elevations, outstanding groves of old growth ponderosa pine and oak woodland dominate the vegetative type. As elevation increases, a transition to fir-aspen (mixed conifer) occurs and then on to a spruce-aspen complex. Douglas-fir is found on the northern aspects throughout the mixed conifer type. The higher elevations, near the tree line, have spruce-fir forest. Interspersed throughout the forested areas are open grassland parks and occasional wet meadows.

Soils: The highly dissected valleys also have a wide variety of surface geology. Soil types, depths, and erodibility vary widely. Every slope aspect (exposure) on the compass exists somewhere in the roadless area.

Wildlife: Wildlife species that inhabit the area are typical to the southern Rocky Mountains. Wildlife habitats are extremely varied because of the large elevational change and resultant numerous vegetative types present. The higher elevations of this area provide excellent summer habitat for elk. The Hermosa drainage has long been known for its quality habitat for elk calving and summer range. The edges of the roadless area are crossed by several major migration routes connecting the summer range areas with winter ranges in the lower country outside the roadless area and the SJNF.

Lynx and peregrine falcon, federal endangered species, inhabit the area. The Colorado River cutthroat trout occurs in Hermosa Creek, Rio Lado, and its tributary streams.

Current uses: The entire area provides a broad spectrum of recreational activities. The Hermosa drainage has long been a special area for recreationists to enjoy activities in a natural setting that would be prohibited in classified wilderness. Although managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity, the area has a system of trails, some of which are designated open to motorcycles and/or ATVs. In more recent years mountain bike use has become the leading recreation use. Water-related recreational activities are mainly stream fishing and enjoying the stream area environment. Outfitting and guiding and fall hunting are primarily the dispersed uses off-trail.

The Bear Creek drainage and associated trails provide a wide opportunity for most uses, including motorized (motorcycling and snowmobiling) hiking, horseback riding and packing, hiking, mountain biking, goat packing, fishing, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing. Outfitters and guides use upper Bear Creek for hunting opportunities.

Surroundings: The NFS lands surrounding this unroaded area are managed for a wide variety of recreational and commodity uses. The area has no logical tie with existing wilderness. The nearest other roadless area is Ryman but it is separate because of the roads constructed between the two areas. Timber sales and associated roads penetrate the edges of Hermosa in the Dutch Creek area, in the upper Mancos River watershed west of Hesperus Peak, and at the upper end of the Junction Creek Road.

Key attractions: Largest IRA in Colorado, Hesperus Mountain, Hermosa Creek.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Lower Bear Creek Trail has low opportunity for solitude while upper Bear Creek is moderate. There is high opportunity for solitude off-trail in the Hermosa drainage except during hunting season. The Hermosa trail has low opportunity due to the motorized use and mountain bikes.

Naturalness: There have been some prescribed burns for wildlife habitat improvement in the area, but they do not materially affect the roadless character. The area includes several range developments including reservoirs, ponds, corrals, spring developments, and allotment fences.

Mining development is found off of Sharkstooth Trail.

Challenge: Nothing listed.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: More than 125 miles of trails cross the roadless area. However, other than Hermosa Creek, the extensive trail network receives low levels of recreational use other than during hunting season. The popular Hermosa Trail is open to all forms of backcountry recreation, including hiking, horses, mountain bikes, motorcycles, and ATVs. Ten tributary trails branch off from the main Hermosa Trail and offer access to several more remote valleys. The Hermosa Creek Trail serves as one of the most popular and scenic mountain bike routes in Colorado. A trail descends from the IRA boundary on the ridgeline, down along Bear Creek to the Dolores River. Travelers can traverse from the Animas to Dolores Rivers, over the crest of the La Platas, without crossing a road or otherwise encountering signs of civilization.

The Colorado Trail runs along Hermosa-Dolores Divide.

Special Features
The proposed Hermosa RNA lies in the Southern San Juan Mountains about 13 miles north of the town of Durango on 8,000 acres at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 12,000 feet. The area is characterized by highly dissected mountain topography and sedimentary geology. Key features include old growth forests, Colorado cutthroat trout, alpine tundra, spruce-fir forests, aspen forests, ponderosa pine forests, mixed conifer forests, and mountain shrublands.

Education: Hermosa RNA is recommended within the IRA.

Scenic features: The area has high scenic values from its undisturbed nature and high alpine peaks.

Manageability

The entire area would be manageable but keeping visitor use along the major trails and restricting mechanized and motorized use off of the Hermosa Creek Trail would be difficult.

Size: The IRA is 148,102 acres, the largest in Colorado.

Boundaries: The plan proposes to change the boundary to the west side of Hermosa Creek with the southern boundary starting at Hermosa Creek following ridge line between Clear Creek on the north and Buck Creek on the south to the intersection with IRA boundary below Forest Road 171 below Monument Hill. The proposed boundary follows the IRA to Diorite Peak then follows the La Plata/Montezuma County line to Spiller Peak then follows a ridge line down to the South Fork of West Mancos River and contours around Hesperus Mountain at 10,600-foot elevation to the North Fork of West Mancos River and follows the IRA line north to Bear Creek Canyon (halfway along the Section 4 and 9 section line Township 37 North, Range 11 West) crossing Bear Creek staying east of a private land inholding and following Grimstone Trail East 608 to join the IRA boundary. The proposed boundary follows the IRA north from the Grimstone Trail/Colorado Trail intersection to the ridge south of Hotel Draw then follow that ridge east to Hermosa Creek then follows Hermosa Creek or the Hermosa Creek Trail 514 south staying west of the trail to the ridge between Clear Creek and Buck Creek.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness. However, the proposed wilderness boundary is more manageable because it does not include most motorized trails, a majority of the outfitter camps, livestock improvements including a cabin on the northern and eastern side of the IRA, and omits high risk wildland urban interface fire zones on the southern end of the IRA. The proposed boundary also adds a 30-year-old timber sale that has been regrown on the northern end that enhances the manageability.

Availability

Recreation: Described in Capability section, above.

Wildlife: Wildlife species that inhabit the area are typical to the southern Rocky Mountains. Wildlife habitats are extremely varied because of the large elevation changes and resultant numerous vegetative types present. The higher elevations of this area provide excellent summer habitat for elk. The Hermosa

drainage has long been known for its quality habitat for elk calving and summer range. The edges of the roadless area are crossed by several major migration routes connecting the summer range areas with winter ranges in the lower country outside the roadless area and the SJNF.

Lynx and peregrine falcon, federal endangered species, inhabit the area. The Colorado River cutthroat trout occurs in Hermosa Creek, Rio Laud, and its tributary streams.

Water availability and use: Unknown

Livestock operations: The current level of livestock grazing is expected to continue and existing range improvements will be maintained and/or upgraded when needed. There are a fair amount of livestock improvements along the east side, including reservoirs, springs, stock ponds, fences, cabins (three) Albert Park, Little Elk, and Goulding Creek cabins. Most of the brush fences built in the 1970s have deteriorated (27 miles in 2 years).

Timber: There are 6,973 acres of suitable timber lands in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: Portions of the area in and around the La Plata Mountains are mineralized and have current ongoing prospecting and mining operations. Mineral potential for the Hermosa Drainage portion is low and there are no known mineral development activities. From the Deadwood Creek RNA evaluation (1996): An active mine occurs on the slope above Deadwood Creek about 0.3 mile north of the southern boundary. The southernmost extensions of the roadless area into the high peaks of the La Plata Mountains, south of Kennebec Pass, contain a number of patented mining claims.

There are currently no oil and gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource surveys within the area have identified numerous artifacts and properties, some of which are likely to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The properties include both historic and prehistoric resources. They range from isolated finds and lithic scatters to historic mines and structures. The predictability of further survey finds is high to moderate in the level areas and stream bottoms and low in the heavily timbered areas and steeper slopes. The La Plata Mountains on the south side of the area are known to be an area of special interest to the Navajos. From Hope Creek RNA evaluation (1996): There are numerous records of historic and prehistoric cultural finds from the vicinity of Hope Creek (Colorado Historical Society records). The finds include aspen art, culturally significant trails, stone tools and tool-making artifacts, and remnants of early European settlement.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments for the area. The existing trail system within the area will continue to be maintained and rehabilitated as funds become available.

Management considerations: The southernmost portion of the roadless area extends into the high peaks of the La Plata Mountains and contains a number of patented mining claims and associated jeep trails. The Hermosa Trail and Colorado Trail receive substantial mechanized recreation use, largely in the form of mountain biking.

<u>Availability Questions</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *There are 35 private holdings within the IRA and most of these are mineral patents.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*

- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Lizard Head wilderness is just over 10 miles north of Hermosa's northern boundary. The Weminuche wilderness is less than 5 miles from the eastern portion of the Hermosa roadless area.

Limited representation cover types: Old growth ponderosa pine is an under-represented ecosystem type in Region 2's wilderness system. Hermosa includes some of the finest quality old growth ponderosa pine left in the San Juan Mountains and in the state of Colorado. The cover types represented in the Hermosa area are presented in Table C.11 below.

Table C.11: Hermosa Area Cover Types

		Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
	Acres	9,820	1,847	623	9,104	126,740	5	148,139
	%	6.6%	1.2%	0.4%	6.1%	85.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Recommended for Wilderness	Acres	5,223	333	205	2,843	42,242	4	50,850
	%	10.3%	0.7%	0.4%	5.6%	83.1%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: Being such a large roadless area, there are benefits to wildlife.

Conclusions: As it is likely the largest remaining NFS roadless area in Colorado, this area would add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Hermosa watershed and dendritic drainage pattern offers extraordinary opportunities for backcountry non-motorized travel and provides an alternative to heavily used routes in nearby wilderness areas such as the Weminuche. There are currently opportunities for mountain biking, motorcycle, and ATV use within this IRA. The Hermosa roadless area provides a corridor between the two river drainages and a link in the landscape between the Weminuche wilderness and lower elevations along the San Juan Mountains' western perimeter.

Regardless of Congressional action to designate the area as wilderness, management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

The proposed wilderness boundary, as mapped in the LRMP, would be manageable as wilderness.

LIZARD HEAD ADJACENT (SJ018) (RARE II 2235) (CRA235)

OVERVIEW

Acres: 5,805

District: Dolores

History: Of the original 17,440 acres identified in the RARE II process as a roadless area, 12,500 were added to the Lizard Head wilderness by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980. The remaining 4,940 were managed without modification and received a relatively low wilderness attribute rating in the RARE II process because of their location along the highway and West Dolores Road and because of mineral activities. Those lands were allocated to recreation and wildlife management emphases. At the conclusion of the 1992 planning period approximately 4,940 of the released acres (7.7 square miles) were to remain unroaded.

Location and vicinity: This area is adjacent to the southern boundary of the existing Lizard Head wilderness, west of Colorado Highway 145 near Lizard Head Pass in the Dolores District in Dolores

County. The current roadless area consists of approximately 5,000 acres immediately south of the present wilderness boundary and north of Colorado Highway 145. (Congress designated the Lizard Head wilderness under the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980.)

Access: The area is accessible via Colorado Highway 145, Black Mesa Road 611(secondary Forest Road), and West Dolores Road 535 (primary Forest Road). Access to the area from the nearby roads is the Cross Mountain Trail 637, Burro Bridge Trail, Kill Packer Trail 203, Groundhog Stock Driveway 634, and Navajo Lake Trail 635.

Physical description: Toe slopes extend southward from the Mount Wilson massif. The toe slope is only moderately dissected by Slate Creek, Coke Oven Creek, and the West Dolores River, three tributaries to the Dolores River. The elevation range is 9,400 feet on the West Dolores River to nearly 11,200 feet near Lizard Head Creek.

Vegetation: Spruce-fir is the only significant overstory vegetative type. Riparian habitat and open grassy meadows are the other predominant site types. There are isolated patches of aspen in the West Dolores River drainage.

Soils: The geology is of igneous origin resulting when the Wilson Mountains were thrust up through sedimentary formations. The soils are the result of the disintegration of the Mancos Shale, Dakota sandstone, and McElmo sedimentaries and vary from clay to sandy loam. Most of the soils are shallow and easily eroded.

Wildlife: Wildlife species that may inhabit the area are those that are common and typically found in the southern Rocky Mountains. Diversity in wildlife habitat is high because the roadless area is a narrow band with a variety of meadow and forest types. Coke Oven Creek and Slate Creek have marginal fishery value and will probably not be locations for future fishery habitat projects. Little Fish Creek and Meadow Creek are marginal because of their steep gradients and low flows. The area contains lynx habitat.

Current uses: The area has several trails crossing from the highway over to the Lizard Head wilderness. Most recreation use is hunting or casual hiking from Colorado Highway 145. The area along the highway provides ample opportunity for sledding, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing in the winter. Mountain biking is gaining popularity along the Groundhog Stock Drive, as are hiking and horseback riding. There is dispersed camping next to vehicles along the West Dolores Road and the east side of Forest Road 611. The area next to Lizard Head Pass is open to snowmobiling. Roads are closed on the south and west side of Lizard Head IRA.

Surroundings: NFS lands to the south and west are managed for a wide variety of recreational and commodity uses. The adjacent area on the north side is the Lizard Head wilderness, managed according to the dictates of the 1980 Wilderness Act.

Key attractions: Key attractions include fall foliage (aspens and as viewed across Colorado Highway 145), view of fourteeners (El Diente Peak and Mount Wilson) in Lizard Head wilderness.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is quite low because of the highway traffic and noise along Colorado Highway 145 and high as one moves west along Groundhog Stock Drive.

Naturalness: The sight and sound of traffic on Colorado Highway 145, Meadows Road, and Road 611 (from Dunton) influences the natural feel of the area. The unroaded character of the area has not been impacted by any management activities in recent years.

Challenge: Snowmobile use in the area.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Slate Creek and Meadows areas are closed year-long to motorized vehicle use. Upper Fish Creek is closed in summer to motorized but open in winter to snowmobiling.

Special Features
The area provides a scenic foreground view for motorists traveling along Colorado Highway 145, which is a portion of the San Juan Skyway, a designated scenic byway and All American Road.

Scenic Features: Foreground to San Miguel range views from San Juan Skyway, Lizard Head monolith.

Manageability

Limiting parking along the roads would be difficult along the meadows.

Size: 5,805 acres, proposed 2,632 acres.

Boundaries: The area cannot be linked to other roadless areas. All alternatives considered are adjacent to the Lizard Head wilderness and could be considered for addition to that wilderness.

Conclusions: This area capable as wilderness.

Availability

Livestock operations: Inactive sheep allotments are in the area. Livestock developments include stock ponds, fences, and the stock driveway.

Timber: Slate Creek and Meadows portions are outside suitable timber base as in the 1992 LRMP amendment. Upper Fish Creek portion is identified as suitable for commercial timber harvest.

There are 745 acres of suitable timber lands in the Lizard Head adjacent roadless area along Forest Road 611 (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The area has low to moderate potential of locatable mineral and moderate potential for geothermal, uranium, oil and gas, and coal.

There are no existing oil and gas leases within the Lizard Head adjacent roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: The few cultural resource surveys conducted in the area have identified isolated lithic artifacts and lithic scatters. There is a moderate to high likelihood of cultural resources occurring in meadows and along drainages. In densely forested areas and on steep slopes, the probability of cultural resource finds is low. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. There is aspen art along the Groundhog Stock Drive.

Authorized and potential land uses: There could be use adjacent to these areas along the existing ROW corridor.

Management considerations: The addition of this area to the Lizard Head wilderness would help the overall management on the south and east side of the wilderness by bringing the boundary down to known geographical features and removing a cherry stem route that has been rehabilitated. There are no significant water or wildlife issues associated with this IRA.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *None known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Moderate potential*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*

- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The area is adjacent to the existing Lizard Head wilderness.

Limited representation covers types: None known. The cover types represented in the Lizard Head Adjacent roadless area are presented in Table C.12 below.

Table C.12: Lizard Head Adjacent Area Cover Types

		Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
	Acres	1,451	322	0	140	3,087	0	5,000
	%	29.0%	6.4%	0.0%	2.8%	61.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Recommended for Wilderness	Acres	546	71	0	127	1,887	0	2,632
	%	20.7%	2.7%	0.0%	4.8%	71.7%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: The area is available for, and capable of, wilderness designation.

The addition of 2,632 acres along the south and west side of the Lizard Head wilderness and the reclaimed road near Cross Mountain Trail 637 would help the manageability of Lizard Head wilderness.

The remaining 2,368 acres along the south and east side of the Lizard Head wilderness would not help wilderness manageability because of the open meadows, an underground telephone line and proximity to Colorado Highway 145.

PIEDRA AREA ADJACENT (SJ 006) (RARE II 2292) (CRA 292)

Overview

Acres: 40,841

District: Pagosa/Columbine

History: The RARE II process found that 39,650 acres were suitable for wilderness and the remaining 83,670 acres lacked wilderness character. The Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 added approximately 1,360 acres of the roadless area in the Pine River valley to the existing Weminuche wilderness. The 1980 Wilderness Act also established the 41,500-acre Piedra Area, which will be managed to maintain those values that make it eligible to be added to the wilderness system until Congress has the opportunity make a decision on the area. The remaining 71,400 acres were allocated to a variety of recreation and commodity emphasis management prescriptions (e.g., to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, wood fiber production, wildlife, and grazing management). These areas contained non-conforming uses including unimproved roads, water development activity, past timber sales (on perimeter), some gas exploration, buildings, and range improvements throughout. Of the 71,400 acres released, as of 1993, the Piedra Area was created for non-wilderness management, approximately 11,800 had been modified through resource management activities, and 60,000 acres (94 square miles) were roadless.

Location and vicinity: The Piedra Area is in two districts, Columbine and Pagosa.

Access: The area is bounded by 16 Forest Roads and a number of roads located in the large block of private land known as the Piedra Valley Ranch. The roadless area boundaries were inadvertently drawn during the RARE II to include one road, Trail Ridge FDR 639, within the area. The number of NFS trails that access and serve the area are too numerous to list.

Physical description: The east side of the area is characterized by south-facing slopes that are deeply dissected by the Piedra River and associated drainages. A few isolated plateau-like areas are scattered throughout. The Piedra River is the dominant drainage feature of the area while the Pine River and East Creek share the far western side of the roadless area.

The elevation ranges from 6,800 feet along the Piedra River to over 12,000 feet near Granite Peak.

Vegetation: Vegetation on the area varies with elevation. Coniferous vegetation occurs over 70% of the area. Aspen stands cover approximately 25% of the area. The conifers include Douglas-fir, spruce, white fir, and ponderosa pine. These forest stands are interspersed with grasses, rock, or riparian vegetation. Browse species such as oak and serviceberry are represented in only a few scattered areas, mostly at lower elevations. Old growth ponderosa pine can be found in the area.

Soils: Except for the slopes of Granite Peak and the First Box Canyon, the geology of the area consists of a sequence of sedimentary rock layers overlying the pre-Cambrian basement of granite and quartzite.

Wildlife: The variety in understory vegetation provides very good wildlife habitat, which includes suitable habitat for two USFS sensitive species, peregrine falcon and northern goshawk. The area contains river otter, a state-listed endangered species. The Piedra Area and Piedra Area Adjacent IRA comprise an important elk and mule deer migration corridor between winter range found in the lower elevations within and outside of the planning area and summer range in the Weminuche Wilderness and in the headwaters of the Piedra River tributaries. A CPW survey identified the Piedra's western forests as some of the best available habitat for lynx based on snowshoe hare populations.

Most of the larger streams in this roadless area provide fishing opportunities. Some of the major streams for fishing are East Creek, Mosca Creek, Coldwater Creek, First Fork, Sand Creek, Weminuche Creek, and the Piedra River. Creeks with marginal fisheries include West Prong, Red Creek, Clear Creek, and Trout Creek. Fisheries habitat improvement projects have occurred on East Creek and the Piedra River.

Current uses: A full spectrum of recreational opportunities and activities is available and enjoyed by many users. Motorized recreation is available in the form of ATV trails in the southwest adjacent to the Forest Lake area. Also a small fuels project is proposed around the Forest Lake area.

Surroundings: The area borders on other NFS lands and private holdings. It shares a common boundary with the Weminuche wilderness between the Pine River valley and Granite Peak on its northwest end.

The NFS lands surrounding this roadless area are managed for a wide variety of recreational and commodity uses. Originally the Piedra roadless area had a logical tie with the Weminuche wilderness through the common boundary between Grassy Point and Granite Peak. However, this tie is somewhat diminished because the West Prong timber sale is now located between the wilderness and the main body of the roadless area. The Piedra roadless area also shares a common point near Granite Peak with the Graham Park area 291.

Key attractions: Coldwater Creek, Devils Hole, and Devil Mountain Trail.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Moderate potential due to lack of motorized routes.

Naturalness: There have been some prescribed burns for wildlife habitat improvement in the area but they do not materially affect the roadless character. The wilderness character of the 41,500-acre Piedra Area has been maintained. Approximately 54,000 acres of the area not already designated for wilderness study remains roadless. A line cabin for livestock permittees is located along the First Fork in the western roadless addition, along with several livestock fences and an improved pond. There are no significant human imprints other than evidence of hunting camps and similar recreational activities in the roadless additions around Devil Creek and the upper Piedra.

Challenge: Remote setting and complex terrain requires wilderness skill and navigational skill.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: The upper end of the First Fork Trail beginning at Beaver Meadows is included within one large adjacent roadless addition to the west. This trail is popular with backcountry horsemen and during hunting season. The East and West Devil Creek trails in the southeast addition are rugged and relatively unused. The upper Piedra River Trail is popular with anglers downstream of the Piedra picnic ground in the eastern roadless addition.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Size: 40,841

Boundaries: Same as described in the overview.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: The Piedra River Trail within the Piedra Area is closed year-long to mechanized recreation (mountain bikes). In the southeast, the East and West Devil Creek trails were closed to motorized use in a 1998 LRMP amendment. Only the Devil Mountain Trail receives regular motorized use at this time. The Heflin Creek and upper Indian Creek addition (Columbine) to the southwest is closed to motorized recreation use by special closure in the travel management plan. The upper First Fork drainage (Columbine) is closed to summer motorized use but winter snowmobile use is allowed. This use occurs primarily along the West Prong timber road and in the adjacent Beaver Meadows, both of which are largely excluded from the roadless area. Approximately half the Bear Creek unit is closed to all motorized vehicles and the remainder contains no trails suitable for motorized vehicles.

Wildlife: Available habitat for lynx, peregrine falcon, and northern goshawk is present. The area contains river otter. The IRA is an important elk migration corridor from winter to summer range.

Water availability and use: Stock ponds are the only uses in the IRA.

Livestock operations: The current level of livestock grazing is expected to continue with only the ranching economy causing any major changes. Existing range improvements will be maintained.

Timber: In the areas where timber harvest has occurred there are opportunities for additional wildlife habitat improvement projects. Some fisheries habitat improvement projects are planned for East Creek but these will be hand constructed and will not modify the roadless character. Old fisheries habitat surveys recommend placing log structures near the mouths of Mosca and Coldwater Creeks.

The Piedra Area contains 17,755 acres of suitable timber lands (update per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The potential for significant development of locatable and leasable minerals in the area is relatively low. This is evidenced in part by the historic low level of exploration activity. Several lease tracts have been applied for but no leases have been issued and no geophysical exploration activity has been proposed. The areas lie north of the Fruitland outcrop, which is generally considered the northern extent of prospective coalbed methane deposits. At the lowest end of the adjacent area there is low potential for conventional gas.

There are currently no existing oil or gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: No extensive cultural resource surveys have been undertaken in the WSA. One significant aboriginal camp has been identified. Other camps may be discovered in the area, although it is unlikely that finds will be numerous or that any structural ruins exist. No important historic priorities are known to exist either within or in the vicinity of the study area. In the portion of the roadless area not included in the WSA, previous inventories have recorded numerous cultural resource properties consisting primarily of isolated artifacts, lithic scatters, and some mixed artifacts. Historic properties include Ute Scarred Trees, aspen art, historic stock driveways, and logging sites.

The roadless area is situated in the historic territory of the Ute nations, but archival research and contacts with members of the Southern and Ute Mountain Ute tribes have failed to identify any specific sites important to the Ute peoples.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments for the area. The area will continue to be managed for the various dispersed recreation opportunities. The trail system will be upgraded and rehabilitated as funds and priorities dictate. The released area outside the WSA could have unplanned road development because of mineral development and oil, gas, and coal leasing.

Management considerations: None known

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: Weminuche

Limited representation cover types: Old growth ponderosa pine. The old growth ponderosa pine stands in the Devil Creek drainages and along the upper Piedra River comprise much of the last 5% of remaining old growth ponderosa stands in the San Juan Mountains. Most of the ponderosa pine old growth is already included within the existing congressionally designated area. However, additional significant stands of old growth ponderosa pine occur along the Piedra River immediately upstream of the protected area and in the southeast portion of the Piedra Area roadless area. Such a large expanse of undisturbed, lower-elevation forest is rare in Rocky Mountains. The cover types represented in the Piedra Area Adjacent roadless area are presented in Table C.13 below.

Table C.13: Piedra Area Adjacent Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	978	797	0	1,344	41,654	17	44,789
%	2.2%	1.8%	0.0%	3.0%	93.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: Elk summer to winter range corridor and habitat for lynx, peregrine falcon, and northern goshawk.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

RUNLETT PARK (SJ012) (RARE II 2293) (CRA 293)

Overview

Acres: 5,615

District: Columbine

History: RARE II recommended the addition of approximately 1,200 acres of the area to the Weminuche wilderness. The 1,200 acres were added to the Weminuche wilderness by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980. The remaining 5,410 acres were released because they had low wilderness attributes ratings due to the visual impacts of the developments around Vallecito Reservoir. The 1983 LRMP allocated 45% of the area to the grazing management emphasis, 20% to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, and the remaining to wood fiber production. The bottom (southern) third of the area was burned in the Missionary Ridge fire of 2002.

Location and vicinity: Runlett Park's northeast boundary abuts the Weminuche wilderness while the rest of the irregularly shaped boundary is adjacent to other NFS lands and private lands in the lower Pine River drainage below the wilderness. The area is surrounded on two sides by the Pine River Road 602 and on the third non-wilderness side by Middle Mountain Road 724.

Access: NFS Trail Runlett Park 530.1 serves the area.

Physical description: A ridge from the summit of Runlett Peak descends to the confluence of the Pine River with Vallecito Reservoir. The ridge has very little dissection by stream channels and appears to be uniform in geological origin.

The elevation is between 8,000 feet near the Pine River's entry into Vallecito Reservoir and 11,288 feet at the summit of Runlett Peak.

Vegetation: The overstory vegetation in the area consists of ponderosa pine at the lower end and spruce and fir on the higher elevations of Runlett Peak. The mid elevations are forested by the mixed conifer type that is prevalent on the SJNF in the mid elevations.

Soils: The soils are varied but all are subject to erosion. Along the west side of Middle Mountain are deep slumpie soils.

Wildlife: Lynx are the known threatened species in the area.

Current uses: The primary recreation use is hunting and hiking. The area does serve as a scenic backdrop for the scenery around Vallecito Reservoir. Much of the area can be seen from the reservoir surface. Outfitters use the area for day rides and big-game hunting. The area is open to ATV use but the topography limits use to old fire lines and existing trails.

Surroundings: The non-wilderness NFS lands around most of the area are managed primarily for their recreational values because of their juxtaposition with the recreation uses of Vallecito Reservoir and the ranching and recreational retreat uses of the private lands in the area.

Key attractions: None.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: There is low to moderate potential for solitude due to the large amount of motorized off-trail use in the area.

Naturalness: This area has been impacted by many recent management activities such as travel management prescriptions and fire suppression activities.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: See Overview.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: See Overview.

Manageability

Size: 5,615

Boundaries: The area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Overview.

Wildlife: See Overview.

Water availability and use: None known

Livestock operations: This area contains active allotments with small facilities such as stock ponds and fences.

Timber: There are 2,267 acres of suitable timber lands within the area (update per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: Potential mineral activity appears to be minimal even though there was some historic mining activity in the general area.

There are no oil and gas leases in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Only two historic sites relating to mining activities are known to occur in the area. Very little survey has been conducted in the area. It is likely that additional sites could occur in open parks and meadows along the drainage. The areas of dense timber and steep slopes have a lower probability of containing cultural resource sites. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments, wildlife habitat improvement projects, or timber harvest activities. Fuels projects are planned for this area near private lands.

Management considerations: None known.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Limited but some potential, no demand*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*

- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The eastern boundary of the roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Graham Park roadless area are presented in Table C.14 below.

Table C.14: Runlett Park Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	352	40	0	245	4,980	1	5,618
%	6.3%	0.7%	0.0%	4.4%	88.6%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

RYMAN (SJ015) (RARE 2315) (CRA 315)

Overview

Acres: 8,665

District: Dolores

History: The RARE II process identified 9,030 acres that were not recommended for wilderness because of numerous unimproved four-wheel-drive routes and range improvements. The 1983 LRMP placed approximately 82% of the area in the semi-primitive non-motorized recreation management prescription and the remaining to semi-primitive motorized recreation and livestock grazing. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, there had been modification of the character of 1,040 acres through subsequent management practices. The 2006 inventory found the actual roadless area to be 8,665 acres through better GIS mapping procedures.

Location and vicinity: The Ryman area covers steep slopes and canyons on the east side of the Dolores River between Scotch Creek and Roaring Fork. Most of the area is located in Montezuma County with about 600 or 700 acres in Dolores County. Its western boundary parallels the Dolores River, with its north and south boundaries paralleling the Scotch Creek and Roaring Fork roads. The eastern boundary is along the past timber sale areas at the top of the Roaring Fork Road.

Access: The area is generally surrounded by Colorado Highway 145, Scotch Creek, and Roaring Fork Road 435. The Ryman and Salt Creek trails provide access and dissect the area for recreation use.

Physical description: Steep slopes climb out of the Dolores River bottom and end in the higher and rolling country between the Dolores River and the Hermosa drainage. The steep slopes that form the Dolores River valley are highly dissected with side drainages that have formed steep-gradient stream bottoms.

The elevation range is between 8,200 feet near the confluence of Roaring Fork and the Dolores River and 10,200 feet near the headwaters of Ryman Creek.

Vegetation: Vegetative overstory is the mixed conifer type with ponderosa-aspen mix in the lower elevations and aspen-white fir mix at the upper end. Depending on exposure there are pockets of Douglas fir and spruce.

Soils: The parent geology of the area is of sedimentary origin. The soils are varied between shallow and deep but are consistently unstable.

Wildlife: Wildlife species inhabiting the area are typical of wildlife found in the southern Rocky Mountains. There is a good animal species mix because of the varied habitats created by the variety of understory vegetation. Fish improvements have been made on Ryman Creek. There are no known threatened or endangered species in the area. Elk winter in this area.

Current uses: Dispersed recreation in the area is mostly from hunting and occasional hiking or similar day-use activities. Most of the use takes place on the Ryman Trail, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and mountain biking. Upper Ryman is open to motorized use (motorcycle). Portions of the area contribute to the scenic enjoyment of visitors driving along the Scotch Creek and Roaring Fork roads. Snowmobiling use is limited and is not an issue in this IRA.

Surroundings: NFS lands surrounding the area provide a variety of values. The area in the river bottom and stream bottoms provides a scenic background for recreationists. The area along the eastern side provides for timber harvest and some domestic grazing. The private lands in the river bottom are involved in ranching and home sites.

Key attractions: Ryman Creek.

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: The opportunity for solitude is low in the Dolores River valley due to Colorado Highway 145, and moderate into the east part of the IRA.

Naturalness: The area appears natural, with fences and trails as the only known physical intrusions.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Hiking, hunting, and nature studies.

Wildlife: Typical of Rocky Mountain ecosystems.

Water availability and use: Several perennial streams, including Ryman Creek and Roaring Forks Creek flow from this IRA, which are substantial tributaries to the Dolores River.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Size: 8,665

Boundaries: The area cannot be connected to other roadless or designated wilderness areas.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Livestock operations: No active grazing allotments

Timber: There are 897 acres of suitable timber lands in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials). However, there are no timber sales planned in the area.

Minerals: There is no potential for locatable minerals or leasable coal. Potential for oil and gas is also low. There are no existing oil and gas leases (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource surveys in the adjacent area resulted in the location of only a few sites. These sites included lithics, lithic scatters, and some isolated artifacts located in meadows. There is a moderate to high likelihood of additional sites being present in meadows, along drainages and near permanent water sources. The likelihood is lower for the steep slopes and dense tree-covered areas. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There has been a watershed project (fish project) in Ryman Creek but its development did not affect the roadless character of the area. There are no other planned developments and projects for any of the SJNF resources. Potential exists for wildlife habitat improvements, but none are planned at this time.

Management considerations: None known

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: The area is available for wilderness.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Lizard Head wilderness is approximately 10 miles north of the Ryman roadless area's northern boundary.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Ryman roadless area are presented in Table C.15 below.

Table C.15: Ryman Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	44	128	0	2	8,486	5	8,665
%	0.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	97.9%	0.1%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including motorized and mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive motorized character of the area.

The area's size and shape lend themselves to manageability as wilderness.

SAN MIGUEL (SJ456) (RARE II 2240) (CRA 240)

Overview

Acres: 64,263

District: Dolores/Columbine

History: The RARE II process identified 60,240 acres of roadless area within the SJNF (the RARE II unit extended 9,630 acres onto the Uncompahgre National Forest to the north). The area was not recommended for wilderness because of historic resource (mining) and recreation uses and low public support for wilderness designation. Under the 1983 LRMP, 81% of the area was allocated to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation. The remaining acres were allocated to increased water yield through vegetation manipulation, semi-primitive motorized recreation, roaded recreation in a rural setting, and sawtimber production. The Uncompahgre portion was recently studied in the GMUG's 2005 roadless inventory as #56 Hope Lake, 6,811 acres; however, no acres were shown as available or capable for wilderness.

The wilderness attributes rating of RARE II for this area was 20, which placed it in the upper half for the Rocky Mountain region. The fairly high rating is attributed to the wilderness character of the high alpine areas in the north and east part.

Location and vicinity: This area is located in seven townships in San Juan County west of Silverton. Its irregular boundary defines a large area that borders BLM lands west of Silverton and NFS lands along the rugged divide between the SJNF and the Uncompahgre National Forest. The western and southern parts of the boundary include lands along the upper Dolores River, Greysill Mountain, Engineer Mountain, and Sultan Mountain.

Access: Points along the following roads are within 0.25 mile of the roadless area: Colorado Highway 145, U.S. Highway 550, Hermosa Park Road 578, Cascade Divide 579, Relay Creek 580, South Mineral 585, Ophir Pass four-wheel-drive 679, Cascade Creek Road 785, and Clear Lake four-wheel drive 815. The area is accessible and served by the following NFS trails: Ice Lake Trail 505, Colorado Trail 507, Engineer Mountain Trail 508, Cascade Trail 510, East Fork Trail 638, Engine Creek Trail 657, Coal Creek Trail 677, and West Lime Trail 679. Parts of several of the trails are now included as a portion of the Colorado Trail.

Physical description: A variety of geological processes formed the high mountain peaks and broad expanses of open rolling alpine tundra areas of the San Miguel roadless area. Glaciers carved deep U-shaped valleys and exposed numerous vertical cliffs.

Elevations range from 8,800 feet near Rico to 13,752 feet at the summit of San Miguel Peak. There are numerous peaks over 12,000 feet and three peaks over 13,000 feet. This area is characterized by many summits above 13,000 feet in elevation with many alpine lakes in between the cliffs. The area's forest is characterized by aspen forests on lower slopes (e.g., around Cascade Creek) and spruce and fir forests on the western side around Sheep Mountain and Lizard Head Pass. However, most of the area is above the tree line. The Lime Creek forest fire in 1879 left stumps and skeletal trees.

Vegetation: Vegetation types vary with aspect and elevation. The forested areas are predominantly spruce and fir in the elevations near the tree line and the mixed conifer type in the lower valleys with white fir, Douglas-fir, and aspen. Above the tree line, alpine shrubs and forbs dominate. They are punctuated with rock points, mountain peaks, and rock cliffs

Soils: The area has a great variety of exposed surface geology and numerous soil types that are shallow and deep, eroding, or stable.

Wildlife: Wildlife species found in the area, both above and below the tree line, are those commonly found in the southern Rocky Mountains. The wide variety of vegetation types creates an equally varied habitat

with a variety of animal species. The Canada lynx is the only known threatened species that has habitat in the area.

Current uses: Because of its large size and spectacular scenery, the area provides a wide variety of dispersed recreation. Recreational activities include everything from hiking and backpacking in isolated areas to motor-biking along trails. Most of the area on the Dolores side is in an F area; snowmobiling in Tin Can Basin is popular, along with backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, ATV use, dispersed camping, and Jeeping. Big-game hunting outfitters and guides use the area. On the Columbine there is snowmobiling, Sno-Cat skiing, and heli-skiing. The Colorado Trail has mountain bike use. Municipal watershed structure for Silverton is located in the northeast corner of the area. The Little Molas and South Mineral areas have recreation campgrounds and power lines, and are cherry-stemmed out of the IRA. There are groomed snowmobile routes on the east side by Molas Lake in the IRA.

Surroundings: Multiple uses of the NFS lands surrounding the area include a wide variety of recreational uses from primitive activities to downhill and helicopter skiing. Timber harvest, wildlife habitat management, and domestic livestock grazing are emphasized in different management units outside the roadless area boundaries.

Key attractions: Trails to Engineer Mountain and Ice Lake Basin; 20-mile segment of the Colorado Trail.

CAPABILITY

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: There is good opportunity for solitude except in those portions of the roadless area that are in close proximity to roads.

Naturalness: The area has some historic resource (mining, logging) use, livestock ponds, and recreation uses in the form of trails and mountain bike routes that affect the naturalness of the area.

Challenge: Difficult peaks

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Most of the area is closed to year-round motorized recreation other than snowmobiling. Snowmobile use occurs in the extreme southwest corner of the area near Bolam Pass, the area around Little Molas Lake, and Sno-Cat skiing around Cascade Divide. Mountain bike use occurs on the Colorado Trail and trails feeding into it. The trail up Engineer Mountain is one of the busiest on the Columbine District. Hunting and big-game outfitters use the area.

Special Features

Education: The proposed Grizzly Peak RNA is in the northwest portion of roadless area, proposed for its tufted hairgrass, wet spruce-fir forest, and alpine vegetation on large areas of shale geology.

Scenic features: Ice Lake Basin, Engineer Mountain, and Grizzly Peak are just some of the scenic features.

Manageability

Size: 64,263 acres.

Boundaries: This roadless area has no logical linking with other roadless areas or existing classified wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: Most of the area is closed to year-round motorized recreation other than snowmobiling. Snowmobile use occurs in the extreme southwest corner of the area near Bolam Pass, the area around Little Molas Lake, and Sno-Cat skiing around Cascade Divide. Mountain bike use occurs on the Colorado

Trail and trails feeding into it. The trail up Engineer Mountain is one of the busiest on the Columbine District. Hunting and big-game outfitters use the area.

Wildlife: The area would provide a corridor from Lizard Head to the South San Juan wilderness.

Water availability and use: Bear Creek is a municipal watershed for Silverton.

Livestock operations: There is an active sheep livestock allotment within the IRA and there are livestock reservoirs in the area.

Timber: Tin Can and East Flattop are in the suitable base for timber. Previous timber sales proposed for the slopes of Sheep Mountain in mature and old growth spruce-fir generated intense public controversy. It is anticipated any future timber sales proposed for the roadless forests within San Miguel would result in similar public controversy. There is no ecological need to manipulate these forests through mechanical means.

There are 2,523 acres of suitable timber lands in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: There is low to no potential for oil and gas or coal. Overall, the area is highly mineralized and could experience a resurgence of hard rock mining activity. Numerous patented mining claims in high valleys have large portions that are underlain by shale, sandstone, limestone, and other sedimentary strata lacking in potential for hard rock minerals. The northern portions of the unit contain more volcanic rocks. The Mineral Creek drainage was the focus of historic mining activities.

From the Grizzly Peak RNA evaluation (1996): Grizzly Peak occurs in an area of concentrated historic mining activity. There are no active mines or mining claims within the potential RNA boundaries. The Graysill Mine, an abandoned gold works, is located 0.5 mile south of the boundary near Bolam Pass.

There are no existing oil and gas leases within the San Miguel roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: From Grizzly Peak RNA evaluation (1996): Three archeological sites and one historic locality are known from Grizzly Peak, including an open camp, two concentrations of stone tool flakes, and an abandoned piece of mining machinery. Cultural resource inventories in the area have identified a number of artifact sites. Most prehistoric sites are lithic scatters and the historic sites are Ute Scarred Trees, historic mining features, and segments of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. Many of these cultural resource properties may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no other USFS recreation developments or wildlife habitat improvement projects planned within this area. The area immediately north of Purgatory ski area has been inventoried as an expansion area for the ski area. There is some potential for cabins being built on patented mines. Unplanned impacts to the area could also result from access roads and utility corridors if the private lands within the area were to be developed.

A Jeep road accessing a 320-acre private inholding near Sheep Mountain is only used by the landowner and is a minor influence on the larger landscape. Another abandoned Jeep trail leading into headwaters of South Mineral Creek, a hiking trail to Hope Lake overlook, also has a minor impact to the area

Management considerations: The Grizzly Peak proposed RNA is located 9 air miles northeast of Rico on the Dolores Ranger District of the SJNF. It includes 5,672 acres of spruce-fir forest, subalpine and alpine wetlands, and alpine turf cover types typical of the high-precipitation zones in the San Juan Mountains. State lands, private inholdings, and cherry-stem roads into the general area would complicate management of this area as wilderness.

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *The northern portion is mineralized.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *The area has potential but there is currently no demand.*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The San Miguel roadless area is about a mile from the existing Lizard Head wilderness, separated by Colorado Highway 145. The area is about a mile from the Weminuche wilderness to the east, separated by U.S. Highway 550.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the San Miguel roadless area are presented in Table C.16 below.

Table C.16: San Miguel Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	18,664	1,681	2,823	11,796	29,099	99	64,162
%	29.1%	2.6%	4.4%	18.4%	45.4%	0.2%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: Lynx and pine marten use this area as a linkage landscape between the Lizard Head and Weminuche wilderness areas

Conclusions: The San Miguel IRA is a large roadless area that would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The IRA offers extraordinary opportunities for backcountry treks along the Colorado Trail and mountain climbing on Engineer Mountain, provides a backyard-style primitive experience for local residents as an alternative to the nearby wilderness areas such as the Weminuche. There are currently opportunities for mountain biking, horse use, and hiking within this IRA. The San Miguel roadless area provides a wildlife corridor between the two wildernesses along the San Juan Mountains' western perimeter. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

Private inholdings, state lands, and roads forming "cherry stems" into the area potentially complicate management of this area as wilderness.

SOUTH SAN JUAN ADJACENT (SJ002) (RARE II 2284) (CRA 284)

Overview

Acres: 34,898

District: Pagosa

History: The RARE II process identified 123,320 acres of roadless area. In total, 44,890 acres were recommended for wilderness and the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 added 39,843 acres of the roadless area to the South San Juan wilderness. An additional 32,800 acres were designated as the San Juan wilderness expansion study area. This study area is actually composed of two separate areas, one adjoining the north (Montezuma Peak) and one adjoining the southwest side of the wilderness (V-Rock).

Subsequent study for wilderness expansion area concluded that both of the areas were not suited for wilderness since they include ecosystems and landforms found in abundance in the Weminuche, the South San Juan, and other nearby wilderness. The probability of a significant mineral discovery and probably oil and gas exploration activities was also fairly high in the expansion areas. The remaining 7,620 acres were not suited for wilderness because of oil and gas potential and numerous non-conforming uses. In the 1983 LRMP, the V-Rock area was allocated to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, wildlife, livestock grazing, and timber management. The major allocation of the Montezuma area was to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, the proposed East Fork ski area, and nominal amounts of semi-primitive motorized recreation, big-game winter range, sawtimber production, and timber management.

Location and vicinity: This large roadless area, 123,320 acres, covers essentially all of the eastern side of the Pagosa District from the Elwood and East Fork drainages southward to the Navajo River. The major part is located in Archuleta County with smaller portions in Mineral, Rio Grande, and Conejos Counties. The area borders the Continental Divide and Rio Grande National Forest on the north and east, the large Banded Peaks Ranch on the south, and mixed NFS lands and private lands on the west.

Access: The area is 0.25 mile or closer to 13 Forest Roads and U.S. Highway 160. Big Branch Road (664) extends into the interior of the roadless area approximately 1.5 miles. The area is accessible and served by a large NFS trail system. Nearly every drainage has a trail leading from a road into the area and then connecting with other trails in the area. The large number of trails is the result of historic livestock use in the area.

Physical description: The physical characteristics of this roadless area vary from open rolling terrain to the spectacular vertical cliffs and peaks of the rugged mountains along the Continental Divide. The area's water courses include numerous streams and rivers, all of which are tributaries of the San Juan or Navajo Rivers. The highly dissected valleys contain a large variety of surface geology and soil types.

The elevation ranges from 7,600 feet on the Blanco River to 13,300 feet at Summit Peak.

Vegetation: The wide range of elevation, slope, aspect, and soil types has resulted in an extremely complex mixture of vegetation communities. However, the southern portion of the roadless area contains one of Colorado's largest and oldest stands of aspen trees, making it an outstanding fall color viewing area on the SJNF. Pine and oak are the dominant vegetation types at the lower elevations. As elevation increases, a transition to mixed conifer occurs and then on to a fir-aspen complex. Douglas-fir is found on the northern aspects throughout the mixed conifer type. The higher elevations near the tree line have spruce-fir forests with the alpine tundra above. Interspersed throughout the forested areas are open grassland parks and occasional wet meadows.

Soils: The area has a great variety of exposed surface geology and numerous soil types that are shallow to moderately deep and mostly erodable.

Wildlife: This area contains numerous wildlife species native to the southern Rocky Mountains. Some of the unique and interesting species are the white-tailed ptarmigan and bighorn sheep. Economic game animals such as deer, elk, and bear are abundant. The wide variety of understory vegetation in the mixed conifer forest type coupled with the many different combinations of overstory tree species results in high-quality habitat for many animal species.

There is suitable habitat for Canada lynx, a federal threatened species.

Fisheries include the headwaters of Blanco River, Quartz Creek, Castle Creek, and Sand Creek.

Current uses: Primary recreation use includes hunting, hiking, hobby gold-panning, and scenic viewing. The fall color season enhances the scenic vistas of this roadless area even though the recreationists are driving on boundary roads.

Since the 1979 RARE II, management activities that changed the roadless character of a small portion of area are the Benson Creek timber sale and the proposed East Fork ski area. The sale impacted 1,120 acres. An additional 840 acres for the access road and outer cutting blocks was also affected by 7.5 miles of new road construction.

Surroundings: NFS lands surrounding this area are managed for a wide variety of recreational and commodity uses. This area is adjacent to the South San Juan wilderness. This area is separated from the Treasure Mountain roadless area by the Elwood Pass Road. The road is an important four-wheel-drive route and also contains a buried natural gas line.

Key attractions: None known

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude ranges from moderate to minimal because of the recreational activities, roads, and campgrounds.

Naturalness: These are smaller areas with few intrusions that affect naturalness.

Challenge: Remote high country setting for alpine scrambling and off-trail travel.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: See current uses.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: None known

Manageability

Size: 34,898

Boundaries: This roadless area is adjacent to the South San Juan wilderness.

Conclusions: The area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See current uses

Wildlife: No known issues

Water availability and use: No known issues

Livestock operations: The area contains active grazing allotments and few facilities such as livestock ponds and fences.

Timber: There are 2,633 acres of suitable timber lands in the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The potential for a significant mineral discovery is high. Oil and gas exploration activities can be considered probable. Low potential for coal development exists in the southwestern one-third of the area. Fifteen oil and gas leases exist in the area and drilling activities are expected in this decade. The majority of the mineralized areas are located in the portion of the roadless area that was not designated for wilderness or allocated to the ski area.

There is a high probability of gas and oil development in the southern half of the area, which would result in the construction of roads, pipelines, and other facilities supporting oil field development.

There are 15 acres of existing oil and gas leases within the South San Juan Adjacent roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource surveys in this roadless area have identified numerous sites and properties. Prehistoric finds include everything from isolated artifacts to lithic groups. Historic resources and features relate to mining and ranching activities and historic "Aspen Art" groves. Predicted sensitivity for cultural resource finds is moderate in meadows and along drainages and low to moderate in the dense forested areas. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe expressed that the East Fork has some historic significance to their peoples but they did not elaborate. There are no other known areas of interest under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned NFS developments in the area. The existing trail system will be maintained and rehabilitated as funds become available.

The areas allocated provide semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity while the areas roaded for other resource uses will be managed for semi-primitive motorized and roaded natural recreational opportunities.

Current levels of livestock grazing are expected to remain the same with existing range improvements maintained and/or upgraded as needed.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? Yes
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *Yes*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *No*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The RARE II analysis indicated that the expansion areas were not needed as an addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The expansion areas include ecosystems and landforms found in abundance in the Weminuche, the South San Juan, and other nearby wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the San Juan Adjacent roadless area are presented in Table C.17 below.

Table C.17: South San Juan Adjacent Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	702	351	263	3,858	29,815	88	35,077
%	2.0%	1.0%	0.7%	11.0%	85.0%	0.3%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

STORM PEAK (SJ002) (RARE 2305) (CRA 305)

Overview

Acres: 57,617

District: Dolores

History: The RARE II process identified 52,720 acres of roadless area, which were not recommended for wilderness due to the many roads constructed into the high country between the Dolores and West Dolores Rivers and the combined effects of developments (e.g., mining, unimproved roads, range improvements). The 1983 LRMP subsequently allocated the area to a wide variety of management prescriptions that emphasize every resource from recreation to intensive wood fiber production. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, approximately 7,350 of the released acres were modified through resource management practices, and 44,920 acres (70.2 square miles) were managed in a roadless condition.

Location and vicinity: The Storm Peak roadless area is located in Montezuma and Dolores Counties. The area is located in portions of nine townships near the center of the Dolores District. The northwestern boundary roughly parallels the West Dolores River except for setbacks to exclude the Stoner Mesa and Eagle Creek Roads, which forms boundaries for the Storm Peak roadless areas. Where the boundary drops down to the Dolores River near Cayton Campground, it turns and meanders southeast along the Dolores River except for setbacks to exclude the roaded areas around Rico and on Taylor Mesa.

Points along the following roads are within 0.25 mile or less of the roadless area boundary: West Dolores Road 535, Stoner Mesa Road 686, Eagle Creek Road 471, Colorado Highway 145, Taylor Creek Road 545, Pothole 692, Taylor Mesa Road 547, and Priest Gulch Road 548. The following NFS trails access or serve the area: Wildcat Trail 207, Calico National Recreation Trail 208, Johnny Bull Trail 639 and 640, Burnett Trail 641, Priest Gulch 645, Twin Springs Trail 739 (also NFS trails 200, 102, 639, 644, 648, 660), Tenderfoot 633, Stoner Creek 625, Falls Creek (East Fork 208, West Fork 640), Geyser Springs Trail 648, Horse Creek, 626 Eagle Creek Trail 624, Spring Creek Trail 627, Twin Springs 729, Loading Pen 738, Section House 200, and School House 660 Trails, all non-motorized, as well as Stoner Mesa Trail. The west two-thirds of the Stoner Area is currently F (open) area.

Points along the following roads are within 0.25 mile or less of the Stoner Mesa portion of the roadless area: Colorado Highway 145, Taylor Creek Road 545, and Taylor Creek Road 201. The following NFS trails access or serve the area: Lower Stoner Trail, Stoner Mesa Trail 624, Stoner Creek Trail 625, and Stoner Creek Trail 738.

Access: The area is accessible via the West Fork Dolores (Dunton Road) from the north and west, and from Forest Road 471(Taylor Mesa) and Forest Road 545 from the south and east.

Physical description: The area includes a variety of topographic features, including mountain peaks, mesas, deep canyons, steep valley slopes, and rolling high country. It is highly dissected by numerous streams that are tributary to the Dolores and West Dolores Rivers. The area is characterized by Stoner Mesa, its sloping sides and the Stoner Creek valley. The area is bounded on the west by the Dolores River and contains various creeks and draws such as Stoner Creek.

The area's elevation ranges from 7,400 feet near the confluence of the two Dolores Rivers up to 12,340 feet at the Elliott Mountain summit in the Stoner Mesa roadless portion.

Vegetation: Vegetation varies according to elevation and exposure. Typically, ponderosa pine and Gambel oak are in the lower country and mixed conifer is found in mid elevations. There are nine or more mountain peaks that have spruce and fir and limited amounts of alpine tundra. In the Stoner Mesa area, aspen forests and ponderosa pine and oak brush are found at lower elevations. Spruce, aspen, and fir are found at higher elevations. Blue spruce occurs occasionally, particularly along streams, and the steep slopes below Stoner Mesa's rim and below the west rim of Taylor Mesa offer pure stands of uncut aspen.

Water availability and use: Fish Creek and Willow Creek are the primary perennial streams within the IRA. Irrigation ditches divert some of the waters originating within the IRA.

Soils: Geology of the area is manifested by rock outcrops and cliffs of both sedimentary and igneous origin. The soil types vary widely and run the full range of instability to stable and shallow to deep.

Wildlife: Wildlife species found in this area are typical of those found in the southern Rocky Mountains. The large number of vegetative types has created an extremely diverse habitat. There are no known threatened or endangered species in the area.

Current uses: Lower Stoner Trail and Forest Trails 624, 625, and 738 run through the roadless area. Livestock use occurs on the mesa top. Stoner Mesa has many livestock ponds, spring develops and reservoirs, and miles of fences. Motorized routes are visible on Stoner Mesa, near Aspen Reservoir. The Sunshine Road is visible for a long distance. Expectation Peak has a communication tower (passive microwave relay). Two-thirds of the area is available for off-road motorized use (F open area) and a majority of trails are suitable for motorized use.

Surroundings: A wide variety of resource and recreational uses occur on the NFS lands surrounding the Storm Peak area. In the Rico area, there are the visages of the mining activity for which the town was settled. Both the Dolores and the West Dolores rivers were studied for Wild and Scenic Rivers values. The Dolores was found to be eligible for addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, but Congress has not acted on the issue.

Key attractions: Stoner Mesa and several 11,000- to 12,000-foot peaks, and primitive natural landscapes.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude is low to moderate due in part to the numerous motorized trails.

Naturalness: There are six or seven stock reservoirs scattered across Stoner Mesa. Although several of these blend closely into the environment, some are evident even to the casual observer. The others have obviously constructed earthen berms, but these six or seven stock ponds are widely scattered across the mesa and are usually screened by dense aspen forest. There also exist several range fences crossing the mesa from rim to rim, which are also well screened.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: The area has a number of trails that provide for a diverse travel-related recreational opportunity. Hunting, hiking, motorcycles, and horseback riding are probably the predominant activities. The Calico National Recreation Trail follows the ridgeline from the Dolores River to Storm Peak and continues on through spruce forests to Morrison Creek. The area also includes the Priest Gulch Trail and the upper end of the Stoner Mesa Trail. The Calico Trail and Priest Gulch Trail are open to motorized recreation use. The Stoner Mesa Trail runs the length of the mesa and the Eagle Peak Trail parallels Stoner Creek. Recreational activities include hiking, backpacking, horse packing, hunting, and fishing. The area is used for backcountry skiing and the northern portion is used by snowmobiles. Recreation outfitters use the area for big-game hunting and packing services, horseback riding, and fishing.

Special Features

Education: None known

Scenic features: The area contains the Calico National Recreation Trail, which was the first national recreation trail designated on the SJNF.

Manageability:

Size: 57,617. The area is large enough to manage as a standalone wilderness area.

Boundaries: The area has an irregular and meandering boundary. The area cannot be linked to other roadless areas or existing wilderness.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Capability.

Wildlife: See Capability.

Water availability and use: See Capability.

Livestock operations: Presently there are no known impacts from planned recreation and livestock management projects. There is some opportunity for wildlife habitat improvement through vegetative manipulation, but no projects are currently planned for the area.

Timber: All previous timber sales were removed in the new inventory.

In total, 5,571 acres are suitable timber lands (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The Department of Energy shows that about 60% of the area may contain nuclear mineral resources. The area also contains known geothermal and locatable minerals. There are existing mineral leases. Patented mining claims dot the Horse Creek watershed west of Rico.

Oil and gas potential is low and there no existing oil and gas leases in the roadless area. There is an existing oil lease on Taylor Mesa (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: The many cultural resource surveys in or about the area have located and identified numerous sites consisting of isolated lithics, lithic scatters, some ground stones, historic aspen art, and habitation structures. Many of these sites are likely to be eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There is a moderate to high likelihood of additional sites occurring in open parks and meadows, along drainages, and on level areas near permanent water sources. The likelihood of sites occurring on steep slopes and in dense timber is low to moderate. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: Access to approximately 17 private land holdings could impact roadless characterizes.

Management considerations: The Calico Trail and Priest Gulch Trail are open to motorized recreation use. There are numerous motorized trails in the area and two-thirds of the area is open to motorized use. Stoner Mesa receives extensive ATV use on decommissioned and/or closed NFS roads.

Availability Questions

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *There is potential for mineral leasing and oil and gas development.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: The area is available as wilderness.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Lizard Head wilderness is approximately a mile from the Storm Peak's northern boundary.

Limited representation cover types: Some old growth spruce-fir in the Dolores River drainage occurs in Storm Peak, including the old growth stands of Truby Creek. The Truby Creek old growth spruce forest is uncommon on the SJNF because it is located on gentle slopes**.** The cover types represented in the Storm Peak roadless area are presented in Table C.18 below.

Table C.18: Storm Peak Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	3,870	664	0	3,017	50,043	29	57,623
%	6.7%	1.2%	0.0%	5.2%	86.8%	0.1%	100.0%

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including motorized and mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive motorized character of the area.

Manageability as a single wilderness unit would be difficult due to the area's convoluted shape, extensive boundary length, and extensive adjacent road network (which includes both open and closed roads).

TREASURE MOUNTAIN (SJ003) (RARE II 2285) (CRA 285)

Overview

Acres: 22,500

District: Pagosa

History: The RARE II process identified 21,910 acres of roadless area that were not recommended for wilderness because of mineral potential and the lack of solitude. Subsequent land use designations made by the 1983 LRMP were 2,310 acres to the potential Wolf Creek Valley ski area (Windy Pass) and the remaining 19,540 acres to semi-primitive non-motorized recreational opportunities. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, of the original 21,910 acres in this roadless area released for non-wilderness management activities, 720 acres had been modified through resource management activities. At the conclusion of the 1992 planning period approximately 21,190 acres were to remain in roadless character.

Location and vicinity: This roadless area is located in portions of seven townships, lying east of U.S. Highway 160, between the East Fork drainage and Wolf Creek. Its southern boundary parallels the East Fork Road from the West Fork Valley up along Elwood Creek to the Continental Divide near Elwood Pass. The eastern leg of the northern boundary follows along the Continental Divide between Elwood and Treasure Pass. The northern boundary drops down along the timber sale areas along the highway on the west side of Wolf Creek Pass.

Access: Points along the following roads are within 0.25 mile of the roadless area: U.S> Highway 160, East Fork 667, Falls Creek 039, and Wolf Creek Road 725. The area can also be reached along the Continental Divide from the Rio Grande National Forest side via Park Creek, Tucker Park, and Elwood Pass roads. The area is accessible and served by the following NFS trails: Treasure Mountain Trail 565, Windy Pass Trail 566, and Silver Creek Trail 567. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail skirts the area along the east side of the area.

Physical description: A prominent ridge descends westward from the Continental Divide with a few high points that are not individual mountains. The area is dissected by seven named tributaries to the forks of the San Juan River, creating an undulating southern exposure of the East Fork. The northern exposure of the Wolf Creek drainage is much steeper with little diversity in its geomorphological form.

Elevation ranges from 8,400 near the confluence of the east and west forks of the San Juan River to 12,000 feet along the Continental Divide.

Vegetation: Vegetation varies with elevation and exposure. On the higher slopes of the southern exposures the dominant cover is spruce and fir. On the mid to lower slopes the mixed conifer type, with aspen, is the predominant cover. The slopes of the northern exposure are nearly all covered with spruce-fir that is punctuated with an occasional cliff or rock outcrop. Near the higher elevations in the Elwood Pass area there are a number of open grassy parks.

Soils: The area has a great variety of exposed surface geology and numerous soil types that are shallow to moderately deep and mostly erodable.

Wildlife: Wildlife species inhabiting the area are typical of the southern Rocky Mountains. Black bear, elk, and yellow-bellied marmot are abundant. A very diverse wildlife habitat created by the mixed conifer forest type results in an equally diverse number of wildlife species. The area contains an active eyrie of peregrine falcon on its west side. There is suitable habitat for Canada lynx. This is where evidence of historic Canada lynx in the SJNF comes from. This area is a migration corridor from east to west. This area is part of the Canada lynx linkage area between the South San Juan and Weminuche wilderness areas.

There are some fishing opportunities in the area: Wolf Creek, East Fork of the San Juan River, Silver Creek, and Falls Creek.

Current uses: The area is managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreational opportunities. Dispersed activities are mostly land-based because the streams do not provide any measurable fishing. Most use, other than big-game hunting, occurs as day-use activities from points along the roadless area border. During the winter months the area around Treasure Mountain is heavily used by snowmobile riders from the top of Wolf Creek Pass and the old Wolf Creek timber access roads. There are two motorized trails, the Windy Pass Trail (primarily motorcycles) and Treasure Mountain Trail (primarily motorcycles), that are open to motorized use.

Surroundings: The use of NFS lands surrounding the roadless area is mostly recreational/tourism-oriented. The area is adjacent to the Wolf Creek ski area, the proposed East Fork ski areas, Elwood Pass four-wheel-drive route, and the Wolf Creek Pass highway corridor. These adjoining areas are managed for their recreation and scenic attributes.

Key attractions: Continental Divide

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: Most of the area can be seen from and affected by the activities along Wolf Creek Pass and the existing and potential ski area. The opportunity for solitude is low to moderate. During the winter months the area around Treasure Mountain is heavily used by snowmobile riders from East Fork Road to Elwood Pass. Elwood Pass is used by snowmobiles and hybrid skiers. Elwood Pass has been one of the entrance points for trespass by snowmobilers into the South San Juan wilderness.

Naturalness: The area is primarily natural in appearance, but is adjacent to the developed Wolf Creek ski area and U.S. Highway 160 is visible and audible from portions of the unit. See also previous section for a description of the area's natural features.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: See Current uses.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: Continental Divide

Manageability

Size: 22,500

Boundaries: The area cannot be connected to other roadless areas or existing wilderness because it is completely surrounded by highways or roads.

Conclusions: The area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Current uses.

Wildlife: The area hosts an active peregrine falcon eyrie along the cliffs and rock outcrops of the western end.

Water availability and use: No known issues

Livestock operations: The area contains active grazing allotments and few facilities such as livestock ponds and fences.

Timber: One timber sale, in 1984, affected the area since the RARE II analysis. The Falls Creek timber sale modified the roadless character of approximately 80 acres. No permanent roads were constructed for this sale. In addition, the roadless area boundary was originally drawn around a portion of the old Falls Creek timber sale areas, which actually have about 640 acres that included old logging roads and clearcut areas prior to the RARE II designation.

In total, 55 acres suitable for timber production (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials)

Minerals: There are no existing oil and gas leases within the Treasure Mountain roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials). The potential for oil and gas is high to moderate. There is high potential for hard rock mining in the Elwood Pass area southwest of Summitville.

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource inventories have resulted in some small limited lithic finds. The area is more known for its historic lore of the "Lost Treasure" for which the area was named. Based on the SJNF cultural resources model and data from surveys in surrounding areas, there is a good chance of additional lithic finds occurring in open parks/meadows and along drainages. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation, wildlife, or timber/harvest projects in this area that would change the roadless character. Potential for the development of hard rock minerals and oil and gas exist in the area; thus road construction is possible.

Treasure Mountain includes the site of the one-time proposed Wolf Creek Valley ski area, approximately 2,370 acres on the area's western boundary. There is currently no formal proposal for Wolf Creek Valley.

Management considerations: Adjacent to existing ski area, backcountry ski use, adjacent to U.S. Highway 160, private property, and development along south boundary.

<u>Availability Questions</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Yes*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*

- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *Yes*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: The area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Treasure Mountain roadless area is less than a mile from the Weminuche wilderness to the northwest, separated by U.S. Highway 160, and separated from the South San Juan wilderness on the southeastern tip by Forest Road 667. Treasure Mountain provides a high-elevation link between the South San Juan wilderness and the Weminuche wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None. The cover types represented in the Treasure Mountain roadless area are presented in Table C.19 below.

Table C.19: Treasure Mountain Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	1,211	543	219	754	19,780	5	22,512
%	5.4%	2.4%	1.0%	3.3%	87.9%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: A lynx track was identified in the East Fork in the early 1990s. This is near the last confirmed grizzly bear sighting in the Southern Rocky Mountains.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

TURKEY CREEK (SJ004) (RARE II 2286) (CRA 286)

Overview

Acres: 25,300

District: Pagosa

History: The RARE II process identified 23,260 acres of roadless area that were not recommended for wilderness because of mineral potential, lack of solitude, and the amount of livestock grazing. Subsequent land use designations by the 1983 LRMP were 14,180 acres to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, 6,640 acres to a livestock use, and 2,600 acres to wood fiber production. As of the 1992 LRMP amendment, of the original 23,260 acres released for non-wilderness management activities in this roadless area, 260 acres had been modified through management activities and 22,350 acres were to remain unroaded at the conclusion of the 1992 planning process. Because of similarities, this write-up combines Turkey Creek RARE II with Sheep Mountain (RARE II 2307).

Location and vicinity: Turkey Creek is located in Mineral and Archuleta Counties near the center of the Pagosa District.

Access: Roads adjacent to the area include the West Fork Road (648), Fourmile Road 645, Snowball Road 646, Jackson Mountain Road 037, Laughlin Creek Road 738, and U.S. Highway 160. Forest Trail 580 accesses the area up Turkey Creek and is the only trail bisecting the roadless area and going on into the Weminuche wilderness.

Physical description: A highly dissected slope descends from the higher peaks along the Weminuche wilderness boundary. Turkey Creek and Quien Sabe Creek are the two main drainages and are tributaries of the San Juan River.

The elevation ranges from 7,600 feet near the mouth of Turkey Creek to 12,137 feet at the summit of Eagle Peak No.2. Another prominent mountain peak and well-known landmark in the Pagosa Springs area is Saddle Mountain at 12,033 elevation.

Vegetation: There is a full range of forest cover types represented, starting with ponderosa pine in the lower elevations, changing to spruce and fir at the higher elevations. There is some alpine tundra near the summits of Saddle and Eagle Peaks. Since the area is generally a southern exposure there is a minimum of tree species that are usually found at comparable elevations on northern exposures.

Soils: The geology of the area is a variety of Quaternary period deposits and is fairly unstable. The area is marked by many prehistoric slumps and slides. The soils are primarily shales, varying in depth, and considered fairly susceptible to erosion as evidenced by the amount of slips, slides, and gullies.

Wildlife: Animals that inhabit this area are typical of the southern Rocky Mountains. Wild turkey and bighorn sheep are present because the overall southern exposure provides excellent habitat. The numerous understory vegetation types with numerous understory plant species provide a large diversity of animal habitats, making the area very rich in all the common fauna species. The area does contain suitable habitat for Canada lynx. This area is part of the Canada lynx linkage area between the South San Juan and Weminuche wilderness areas.

Current uses: Recreational use of the area is mostly hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. Fishing opportunities exist in Turkey Creek. A motorized trail runs about 3 miles up Turkey Creek from the trailhead.

Surroundings: The area is surrounded by the Weminuche wilderness on its northern boundary, private lands along its eastern boundary, and a mix of private and NFS lands on the south and west boundaries. The use of NFS lands surrounding the roadless area has been varied. Aside from the adjacent wilderness lands other resource activities include timber sales and livestock range improvements in the Four Mile and Snowball drainages. Activities along the eastern boundary on the private lands are ranching and subdivisions. There is also a USFS summer home group along the boundary. Adjacent private ranch lands are protected in part by private conservation easements.

Key attractions: Turkey Creek

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunities for solitude vary from low to high depending on location in this large roadless area. Solitude is low along the highway and Wolf Creek Pass, becoming high as one nears the wilderness boundary.

Naturalness: This area has not been modified by any resource management activities.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: The area is closed to motorized use except for snowmobiling on ungroomed routes.

Special Features

Education: None known

Scenic features: Turkey Creek

Manageability

Size: 25,300

Boundaries: Same as described in the overview.

Conclusions: This area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Overview.

Wildlife: See Overview.

Water availability and use: None known

Livestock operations: There are a number of fences erected for the control of livestock. The area also contains a number of livestock watering ponds.

Timber: There are currently 3,914 acres of suitable timber lands (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: The southern two-thirds of the area has a low potential for coal development. Regional studies indicate that the area may contain limited hard rock minerals.

The southern two-thirds of the IRA has a moderate to high potential for oil and gas development. There are currently no existing oil and gas leases (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Cultural resources: Very few cultural resource properties have been recorded in the area. Isolated lithics and lithic scatters do occur. Based on data from surrounding areas, there is a moderate to high likelihood of sites occurring in open parks and meadows, along drainages, and in level areas. There is a low to moderate chance of sites occurring in densely timbered areas and on steep slopes. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no other planned recreation, wildlife, or range projects in this area. Potential for terrestrial and stream habitat improvement projects exist in the area but none are planned.

Management considerations: None known

<u>Availability Questions</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No development, but there is potential.*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: The area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Turkey Creek roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness on the north and west side.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Turkey Creek roadless area are presented in Table C.20 below.

Table C.20: Turkey Creek Area Cover Types

		Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
	Acres	2,491	349	39	1,408	21,023	15	25,326
	%	10	1	0	6	83	0	100
Recommended for Wilderness	Acres	241	6	0	29	301	0	578
	%	36.3%	0.9%	0.0%	4.4%	58.4%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: The area provides suitable habitat for lynx and wolverine and comprises an important big-game migration corridor.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The LRMP does recommend 578 acres as a proposed addition to the Weminuche wilderness to enhance manageability.

Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

WEMINUCHE ADJACENT (# SJ020) (CRA 320)

Contains Poison Park (RARE II 2290), Davis Mountain (RARE II 2288), Monk Rock (RARE II 2289), Martinez Creek (RARE II 2287), and Elk Park (not RARE II).

Overview

Acres: 23,614

District: Columbine, Pagosa

History: This roadless area is a combination of numerous roadless areas adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness area. Several of the areas were studied under RARE II including Poison Park. The RARE II study recommended wilderness designation for 1,100 acres and that the remaining 7,960 acres be allocated to multiple use management. The Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 added approximately 100 acres to the Weminuche wilderness, in the Middle Fork drainage. The Monk Rock RARE II study identified 2,260 roadless acres that were not recommended as wilderness. The Davis Mountain RARE II study identified 1,320 acres of roadless area that were not recommended for wilderness. The Martinez Creek RARE II study identified 6,420 acres of roadless area that were not recommended for wilderness. Additional areas were identified in the roadless inventory review done for the 2007 inventory done for the plan revision. It is appropriate to look at all of these roadless areas adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness together because they have similar characteristics. More specific information about location, access, physical description, vegetation, soil, and wildlife can be found in Appendix F of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, SJNF, 1992 Elk Park was not studied during RARE II; however, the area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness and at 616 acres it is an NFS tract along the Animas River bounded on the north by the Colorado Trail on the east by the Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. and Animas River and the rest of the boundary is Weminuche wilderness. Elk Park does have mining claims over nearly the entire area.

Location and vicinity: These roadless areas are described by an irregularly shaped boundary that includes ridge areas, major river drainages, and tributaries.

Access: Many points along the boundaries are located within 0.25 mile of NFS system roads and Forest Trails.

Physical description: These areas consist of narrow bands along the west and north sides of the Weminuche wilderness. These areas represent the toe slopes descending from the wilderness boundary.

The elevation range is between 8,000 and 12,000 feet above sea level.

Vegetation: The major overstory vegetation cover is mixed conifer (spruce, white fir, Douglas-fir) with aspen in the higher elevations and ponderosa pine at the lower elevations. These areas also contain some open grassy parks. Vegetation types do not significantly vary except for elevation changes, aspect, and slope orientation.

Soils: Geology of the area is the rocky moraines along the ridges and colluvial sedimentary rocks and shale along the narrow portion at top of the area. The soils are shallow to deep and subject to mass erosion along the cliffs as evidenced by the large mud flow that covered the Williams Creek and Poison Park roads in 1979. Soils along the ridges are shallow and are not prone to mass wasting.

Wildlife: Wildlife species inhabiting this area are typical of the species that are found throughout the SJNF portion of the southern Rocky Mountains. The mixed conifer vegetation type with its large variety of understory vegetation types makes this a prime area for many species. Bald eagles are the only known threatened species in the area. Cliffs provide peregrine falcon habitat. Bighorn sheep are known to winter in the area around Poison Park. Much of the area has suitable lynx habitat.

There are permanent streams that support fisheries habitat.

Current uses: Hiking and hunting are the two most popular dispersed recreation activities. The areas are also crossed by a number of wilderness users on the trails that lead into the Weminuche wilderness.

The adjacent areas are considered to be a primary recreation area with fishing streams, four large campgrounds, the state recreation area at Williams Creek Reservoir, and three trailheads for wilderness users. The private lands are used for ranching and these operators also have many grazing permits for grazing on the SJNF around and in the roadless area. The area is closed to summer motorized travel. Southern portions of the area along roads are open to winter snowmobile.

Surroundings: There is a wide variety of resource and land uses outside the roadless area on the non-wilderness NFS lands. There is a lot of incidental day use by visitors who are utilizing the popular areas and USFS campgrounds in the adjacent areas.

Key attractions: Middle Mountain, the Keyhole, the Notch.

Capability

<u>Environment</u>
Opportunity for solitude: Opportunity for solitude ranges from moderate to minimal because of the recreational activities, roads, and campgrounds.

Naturalness: These are smaller areas with few intrusions that affect naturalness.

Challenge: The campground and trailhead from Williams Creek encroaches one of the areas.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Dispersed recreation such as hiking, hunting, and nature studies.

<u>Special Features</u>
Education: Williams Creek White Fir RNA and Martinez Creek RNA.

Scenic features: The Monk Rock area has three major scenic rock features and the Keyhole, which provides a scenic backdrop.

Manageability

Williams Creek White Fir RNA and Martinez Creek RNA.

Size: 23,614

Boundaries: These areas cannot be logically added to any other roadless areas although they are adjacent to an existing wilderness.

Conclusions: These areas are capable as wilderness and could be added directly to the existing Weminuche wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: Dispersed recreation such as hiking, hunting, and nature studies.

Wildlife: See Overview.

Water availability and use: No known issues.

Livestock operations: Several areas are in livestock allotments.

Timber: The Martinez Creek portion has 1,113 acres that are suitable timber lands (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials). The other segments are not in the suitable timber base.

Minerals: Based on past mineral activity it is not anticipated that there will be any mineral or oil and gas activity. However, mineral claims are present on Elk Park portion of the IRA.

No oil and gas leases. Potential for minerals is low to none.

Cultural resources: A small number of cultural resource sites have been located in the area. They consist primarily of isolated lithic artifacts and lithic scatters. The likelihood of finding additional sites is moderate to high along the streams and in the open meadows. The probability of finds in all other areas is moderate. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments in the area; however, part of the Palisade horse camp encroaches on one of the roadless area parcels. There is opportunity for wildlife habitat improvement projects in these areas, but none are planned at this time. Those portions of the areas are included in an RNA, while another RNA is proposed. All RNAs will be managed in accordance with national direction and standards. There is no timber harvest activities currently planned, though portions of the area are suitable for timber.

Management considerations: 580-acre Williams Creek RNA, which was created as a representative sample of white fir forest. The Martinez Creek potential RNA, an old growth spruce-fir area, undisturbed for at least the last 500 years, is located approximately 9 miles of Pagosa Springs on the Pagosa Ranger District of the SJNF. It includes 1,062 acres of spruce-fir, subalpine wetland, and deciduous riparian forest cover types.

Monk Rock has a segment of the Piedra River's Middle Fork that is proposed for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (along the western boundary of the area).

<u>Availability Questions:</u>

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *No*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: These areas are available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: The Weminuche Adjacent roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness on the western and southern boundaries of the wilderness area. Weminuche Adjacent would expand the ecological diversity of the Weminuche wilderness by adding grassy parks, stands of mixed conifer, and a reference site for white fir.

Limited representation cover types: The Williams Creek RNA, a representative sample of white fir forest, and the Martinez Creek potential RNA, an old growth spruce-fir forest. The cover types represented in the Weminuche Adjacent roadless area are presented in Table C.21 below.

Table C.21: Weminuche Adjacent Area Cover Types

		Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
	Acres	6,370	1,939	692	1,909	12,698	6	23,614
	%	27.0%	8.2%	2.9%	8.1%	53.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Recommended	Acres	0	0	368	0	372	0	740
	%	0.0%	0.0%	49.7%	0.0%	50.3%	0.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: None known

Conclusions: The majority of these areas would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. However, the addition of two tracts, Elk Park and Monk Rock, would allow for consistency in management and is recommended.

Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation.

Recreation use in the including mechanized travel would be allowed outside Elk Park and Monk Rock while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

WEST NEEDLES (SJ012) (RARE 2303) (CRA 303)

Overview

Acres: 6,881

District: Columbine

History: 15,800 acres of the original 24,550 RARE II roadless area were recommended for wilderness. These acres eventually were included in the West Needle WSA by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 and were later added to the Weminuche wilderness area by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993. The balance was released to semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, motorized recreation, and livestock production under the 1983 LRMP.

Location and vicinity: The West Needle roadless area is located on the Columbine District in San Juan and La Plata Counties, east of U.S. Highway 550 from Molas Pass to the southeast of Electra Lake.

Access: Access to the area is via Colorado Highway 950, Lime Creek Road, 591, Haviland Lake Road, 671, and an unnumbered four-wheel-drive trail to Forebay Lake near Haviland Lake. The area is also accessible by the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad at Needleton. Cascade Creek Trail 511 and the Crater Lake Trail 623 are the two primary Forest Trails serving the area.

Physical description: The San Juan Uplift has characterized this roadless area, which contains rugged and steep terrain in the northern part and then slopes down to the southwest in a series of sedimentary benches. The mountains have been uplifted and subjected to glacial erosion and shaping.

The elevation range is 7,200 feet near the Animas River at the southern end up to 9,676 feet on northern end.

Vegetation: The area has a great amount of natural ecological and vegetative diversity resulting from variations in landform, soils, and geology. The drainage patterns, steep slopes, and rocky areas, which are characteristic of the area preclude the possibility that large continuous areas of a single vegetation type will ever dominate the area. Vegetation is mainly alpine and sub-alpine intermixed at lower elevations with deciduous and coniferous trees, with large natural openings and a mosaic of rock outcrops.

Soils: The geology of the area consists mostly of pre-Cambrian metamorphic and intrusive igneous rocks. Lower flanks of the mountains and canyon walls are veneered with talus, landslide deposits, and thin gravels. Rocks of the western half of the area are metamorphosed lava flows, called twilight gneiss. The southern two-thirds contain metamorphosed volcanics and sediments. Soil characteristics and production potentials within the area vary considerably as a function of landform, slope, and parent material.

Wildlife: Wildlife species presently found in the West Needle include the typical species of the southern Rocky Mountains. The area contains known lynx and bighorn sheep habitat. Bald eagle and osprey use electric lake. There are no known listed threatened or endangered species presently inhabiting the area. Habitat for pine marten, a species of limited population, is also found in the area.

Most lakes and streams in the roadless area contain fish. East Lime Creek is the only stream that has previous fisheries habitat improvement projects.

Current uses: There are no developed recreation sites within the area and no recreational structures other than trails. In the Purgatory Flats trails, a wide range of dispersed recreational activities take place. Some of the more common activities include driving for pleasure along the roads skirting the area to backpacking and rock-climbing. The area also provides one of the most scenic backdrops for the many motorists traveling along U.S. Highway 550 and for skiers using Purgatory ski area.

Surroundings: Most of the western boundary from Electra Lake to Cascade Creek is being developed with private subdivisions and homes. NFS lands adjacent to the area are managed to provide a wide variety of recreational activities and uses. Commodity uses such as timber sales and livestock production have not been emphasized in land management because of their potential visual impact to recreation uses along the U.S. Highway 550 corridor, Durango Mountain Resort (Purgatory ski area), and the many private homes and developments along the highway. U.S. Highway 550 has been designated a scenic byway, giving the area a national dimension of scenic and recreational importance.

Key attractions: The West Needle area incorporates the opposite side of the East Animas viewshed from the train route. The West Needle area would extend the Weminuche wilderness to the mid-elevation reaches of the Animas River.

Capability

Environment

Opportunity for solitude: Opportunities for solitude are low to moderate depending on the terrain between the user and the developments along the western side. The higher in elevation the IRA becomes, the more noticeable the impact from development along U.S. Highway 550. The Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad affects the solitude in this area.

Naturalness: The West Needle area contains no facilities other than recreation trails. There have not been any recent wildlife habitat improvement projects or timber sales. A portion of the area was involved in the historic Lime Creek burn. Only a minor portion of the burn was replanted with spruce and lodgepole pine below the Lime Creek Road the reminder of the burn was allowed to naturally revegetate.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: A wide range of dispersed recreational activities take place. Some of the more common activities include driving for pleasure along the roads skirting the area to backpacking and rock-climbing.

Special Features
Electra Lake RNA is proposed within this IRA.

Education: None known

Scenic features: The area is seen from both the San Juan Skyway and narrow gauge railroad.

Manageability

Size: 6,881

Boundaries: This roadless area is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Conclusions: The area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: Low visitor use occurs with some of the dispersed recreational activities being fishing, backpacking, and rock climbing.

Wildlife: The area contains known lynx and bighorn sheep habitat. Bald eagle and osprey use Electra Lake. The area contains habitat for pine marten.

Water availability and use: There are two dams within the IRA.

Livestock operations: The allotment that this IRA is in is currently vacant.

Timber: There are 204 acres of suitable timber lands within the roadless area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials).

Minerals: Current mining activity, which is limited to a number of unpatented mining claims, is minimal. There are no applications or existing leases for leasable minerals. The potential for mineral deposits exists on the area, although there is little activity on existing claims. The geology indicates low potential for leasable minerals such as oil, gas, and geothermal resources. This section is completely surrounded by NFS lands and has been identified as highly desirable for acquisition by the USFS.

Low potential for oil and gas and coal is in this area. There are no existing oil and gas leases within the area (per December 2005 Governor's roadless meeting materials)

Cultural resources: Although no archeological field surveys have been undertaken in the area, it is possible that remnants of some small prehistoric camps exist. The area is considered to have low archeological sensitivity. There are some historic logging cabin (tie production) remnants in the area. The area was used for ties during the building the narrow gauge railroad. There are no known areas of interest that any tribes may have under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

The area is situated in the historic territory of the Ute Nations. Archival research and contacts with members of the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes, however, have not identified any specific sites important to the Ute peoples.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no planned recreation developments in the area. Some trailhead and interpretive facilities are being constructed along the borders to serve the public traveling along the highway and/or those who may stop and enter the area for a variety of recreational activities. There are no planned timber sales or wildlife habitat improvement projects planned for this area. There are fuel treatment projects planned for the southern portion adjacent to Electra Lake. The NFS lands will be managed to maintain their roadless character.

Management considerations: The Electra Lake potential RNA is located 22 miles north of Durango on the Columbine Ranger District of the SJNF. It includes 2,265 acres of glacial topography set in the Las Animas River valley. The vegetation consists of ponderosa pine savanna, mixed conifer forest, aspen forest, and moraine wetland cover types. The area is used primarily for recreation, especially hiking.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *Not known*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *There is potential for mineral activity.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *Not known*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: West Needles is adjacent to the Weminuche wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the West Needle roadless area are presented in Table C.22 below.

Table C.22: West Needle Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	5	120	0	202	6,648	74	7,049
%	0.1%	1.7%	0.0%	2.9%	94.3%	1.0%	100.0%

Wildlife needs: The area contains known lynx and bighorn sheep habitat. Bald eagle and osprey use Electra Lake. The area contains habitat for pine marten.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

WINTER HILLS/SERVICEBERRY MOUNTAIN (SJ 287) (CRA 287)

Overview

Acres: 5,114

District: Pagosa

History: None known.

Location and vicinity: West of Colorado Highway 84 near South San Juan wilderness.

Access: Colorado Highway 84 and NFS roads. The Serviceberry IRA is bordered on the west by private land and Colorado Highway 84. This CRA is separated from the South San Juan wilderness to the east by a series of timber harvest units along with ancillary roads. It is administered by the Pagosa Ranger District. The area is 0.25 mile or closer to eight NFS roads and Colorado Highway 84. There are no Forest Trails in the IRA.

Physical description: This IRA is within the South-Central Highlands Ecosection (M331G), with elevations ranging from 7,150 feet on the Blanco River to 8,420 feet at Winter Hills. The physical character of this roadless area is dominated by Serviceberry Mountain and Winter Hills. Interspersed throughout the forested areas are open grassland parks and occasional wet meadows. The area's water courses include numerous streams, all of which are tributaries of the Rio Blanco.

Vegetation: The range of elevation, slope, aspect, and soil types have resulted in ponderosa pine and oak as the dominant vegetation types. Interspersed throughout the forested areas are open grassland parks and occasional wet meadows.

Soils: The IRA surface geology is dominated by Picturecliff sandstone and Lewis Shale, while the soil types contain Hermette slit loam-Cortado, Boulderpark, Pargin, and Sixhorse Catchpole complex.

Wildlife: This area contains numerous wildlife species native to the southern Rocky Mountains. Deer, elk, turkey, black bear, and mountain lion use the area extensively. CPW has mapped this IRA as severe winter range for elk. The area is part of a major migration corridor for elk and mule deer. Due to its lower elevation, the southern aspects are used in the winter by Merriam's turkey.

Fisheries: Typical of southern Rocky Mountain perennial stream systems.

Current uses: Grazing. There are 400 acres leased for oil and gas development.

Key attractions: None known

Capability

Environment
Opportunity for solitude: The area is large enough to provide for some solitude, but sights and sounds of human imprints are evident in many places due to topography.

Naturalness: The area is primarily natural in appearance.

Challenge: None known.

Outdoor recreation opportunities: Hunting, wildlife viewing, backcountry hiking, and scenery.

Special Features
Education: None known

Scenic features: Excellent fall color viewing.

Manageability

Size: 5,115

Boundaries: Adjacent to Colorado Highway 84 and private lands on the west, general NFS lands on the east.

Conclusions: The area is capable as wilderness.

Availability

Recreation: See Capability section, above.

Wildlife: Black bear and winter elk range. The large amount of Gambel oak proves important fall forage for black bears.

Water availability and use: There are seven stock ponds, a guzzler, five reservoirs, one developed spring, a water pipeline, and a headgate within the IRA.

Livestock operations: Some grazing occurs within the area.

Timber: None historically, but timber harvest units bound the IRA on the east.

Minerals: None known.

Cultural resources: Previous cultural resource surveys in this roadless area have identified numerous sites and properties. Prehistoric finds have included isolated artifacts and lithic groups.

Authorized and potential land uses: Grazing allotments, municipal watershed.

Availability Questions:

- Is the area vitally needed for increased water protection and storage? *This IRA is within a state defined source water assessment area (municipal water supply).*
- Would wilderness designation seriously restrict important wildlife management measures? *No*
- Does the area have high strategic or economic mineral development potential? *Yes, within the 400 leased acres.*
- Are there unique or outstanding natural phenomena that require public access and development that would be inconsistent with wilderness designation? *No*
- Is the land needed to meet clearly documented resource demands such as for timber, minerals, or developed recreation sites including winter sports? *No*.
- Are there existing contractual or other significant obligations on the area not in concert with wilderness designation? *No*

Conclusions: This area is available for wilderness designation.

Need

Nearby wilderness: South San Juan wilderness.

Limited representation cover types: None known. The cover types represented in the Winter Hills/Service Berry roadless area are presented in Table C.23 below.

Table C.23: Winter Hills/Service Berry Mountain Area Cover Types

	Forbs	Grass	Bare	Shrubs	Trees	Water	Total
Acres	282	131	0	1,897	2,804	0	5,114
%	6%	3%	0%	37%	55%	0%	100%

Wildlife needs: CPW severe elk winter range area.

Conclusions: This area would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Management under the Colorado Roadless Rule would protect roadless characteristics while allowing for management activities not allowed under wilderness designation. Recreation use including mechanized travel would be allowed while maintaining the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the area.

CHAPTER 4 – REFERENCES

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