

Recreation Opportunities Spectrum



Horseback Riders in the High Uintas

6a. Recreation Opportunities Spectrum (ROS)

Summer Recreation

The Forest Service has used ROS since the 1980's as a management tool to describe and allocate outdoor recreation settings. See Forest Service, ROS Book, 1986 (USDA Forest Service. 1986a.). ROS is applied only to non-snow seasons and is a key component of management direction in this Forest Plan. The ROS system provides a way to help managers and recreation users understand what recreation experiences to expect through narrative descriptions and where these are available across the forest through maps. ROS can help people visualize the variety of natural outdoor settings, the types of activities that can be pursued, and how many other people might be found in an area of the forest. The system is applied in combination with other management direction such as management prescriptions, desired future conditions, standards, guidelines, goals, and objectives to define expectations about management of a particular area of the forest.

Table 11 provides a description of each of the seven ROS classes applied to the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. These classes were applied using rules established in the ROS manual (USDA Forest Service. 1986a.) in conjunction with minor adjustments for local conditions. ROS (non-snow season) maps are included within Section B of this Chapter "Area Specific Direction" for each Management Area. Descriptions provided for physical, managerial and social settings are to be applied as guidelines (as opposed to standards).

ROS Application and Relationship to Travel Planning and Management

The relationship between ROS mapping and Travel Management Plans must be defined because each has some effect on the other. During development of this Revised Forest Plan, it became clear that ROS mapping should be used as guidance for management of recreation settings with access type (such as motorized or non-motorized) allowances determined through site-specific travel management planning.

The following examples are provided to clarify the relationship of ROS and travel planning. A mapped ROS Class such as Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized is not intended to preclude consideration of future motorized routes in that area, for example to develop a loop between existing motorized routes. Likewise, an area mapped as Semi-Primitive Motorized because of an existing motorized trail is not intended to be precluded from consideration for closure and return to non-motorized status. ROS Maps provide direction for managing recreation settings *until such time that Travel Management Plans are updated through site-specific analysis*. As Travel Plans are updated, that analysis can include alternatives that will amend the Forest Plan ROS Maps. In other words, ROS Mapping necessarily follows Travel Management Plan updates, rather than precluding certain changes

to them. This ensures that a range of options can be considered at the site-specific level, which is the appropriate scale for decision-making on designated open travel routes. This is an expected and appropriate type of adaptation of the Plan to changes in the future.

ROS also has implications for road maintenance objectives. The ROS classification encourages a particular maintenance level for a road and a distinction is made in travel ways, based on the design and ability to allow passenger car travel. In the State of Utah licensed vehicles can drive on all roadways that allow travel, whereas unlicensed vehicles are only allowed on primitive roadways that are not designed or maintained for passenger car travel. In general, Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) denotes travel ways that are not maintained for passenger car use (i.e. more primitive type roads). However, there are instances where SPM may be mapped over higher maintenance level roads. We expect that road maintenance objectives will be validated and updated during Roads Analysis or Travel Management Plan updates at which time either the road maintenance objective may be adjusted or the ROS maps may be adjusted to match the validated objective.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the ROS maps are NOT Travel Management Maps and do not show which routes are designated as open to motorized uses. A ROS Class of motorized on the map may be the result of motorized routes nearby but off National Forest that influence the recreation setting on National Forest. A good example of this is in some areas of the Wasatch Front foothills where roads off Forest create sights and sounds that cause the adjacent Forest to be mapped as semi-primitive motorized even though there are no motorized routes within them on National Forest.

Table 11. Settings and opportunity descriptions for identified ROS classes.

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Wilderness/Primitive	Physical	Theme: Remote (3 miles from motorized use), predominately unmodified, naturally evolving landscape character Location: MPC 1.1, High Uintas Wilderness Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – non-motorized trails are present <i>Fishing Sites</i> – rivers and lakes <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – not developed or defined, leave no trace <i>Sanitation</i> – no facilities, leave no trace <i>Water Supply</i> – undeveloped natural <i>Signing</i> – minimal, constructed of rustic natural materials <i>Interpretation</i> – through self discovery and at trailheads <i>Water Crossing</i> – minimal, some bridges made of natural (non-dimensional) materials may exist, but are rare Vegetation: Natural, no treatments except for fire use

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Wilderness/Primitive	Managerial	Few signs, few encounters with rangers, travel on foot and horse, no motorized or mechanized travel allowed
	Social	Local adjustment: High Uintas Wilderness may have the sights and sounds of commercial flight routes near by or directly over the Wilderness Off Trail System: Very Low encounters with other parties Trials: Low encounters with other parties Camp Spacing: Should not be closer than one mile apart Opportunities: Closeness to nature; self-reliance, moderately-high to high challenge and risk; little evidence of people off of trails
Wilderness/Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	Physical	Theme: Remote (less than 3 miles from motorized use), predominately unmodified, naturally evolving landscape character Location: MPC 1.2 & 1.3, High Uintas MPC 1.1 - 1.3, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak, Mount Naomi and Wellsville Mountain Wildernesses Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – non-motorized trails are present <i>Fishing Sites</i> – rivers and lakes <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – not developed or defined, leave no trace <i>Sanitation</i> – no facilities, leave no trace <i>Water Supply</i> – undeveloped natural <i>Signing</i> – minimal, constructed of rustic natural materials <i>Interpretation</i> – through self discovery and at trailheads <i>Water Crossing</i> – minimal, some bridges made of natural (non-dimensional) materials may exist, but are rare Vegetation: Natural, no treatments except for fire use
	Managerial	Few signs, few encounters with rangers, travel on foot and horse, no motorized or mechanized travel allowed
	Social	Off Trail System: MPC 1.1 in Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak, Mount Naomi, and Wellsville Mountain Wildernesses Low encounters with other parties Trials: MPC 1.1 in Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak, Mount Naomi, and Wellsville Wildernesses –Low encounters with other parties MPC 1.2, 1.3 in High Uintas, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak, Mount Naomi and Wellsville Mountain Wildernesses –Low encounters with other parties Local Adjustment: High Uintas, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak and Mount Naomi, and Wellsville Wildernesses all have the sights and

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Wilderness/Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	Social	Sounds of commercial flight routes near by or directly over the wilderness Local Adjustment: Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak Mt. Naomi, and Wellsville Wildernesses are adjacent to population centers and the sights and sounds of these communities could be evident Local Adjustment for Weekends and Holidays Trails: High Uintas, Mount Naomi, Wellsville Mountain and Deseret Peak Wildernesses – MPC 1.2 – Moderately Low encounters with other parties Local Adjustment for Weekends and Holidays Trails: Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, and Lone Peak Wildernesses – MPC 1.2 – Moderate encounters with other parties Local Adjustment for Weekends and Holidays Trails: High Uintas, Mount Naomi, Wellsville Mountain, and Deseret Peak Wildernesses – MPC 1.3 – Moderate encounters with other parties Local Adjustment for Weekends and Holidays Trails: Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, and Lone Peak Wildernesses – MPC 1.3 – High encounters with other parties (reason for high encounters is because access to a desired destination is on a cherry stem trail) Camp Spacing: MPC 1.2 - 1.3, High Uintas – Campsites should be no closer than ¼ mile apart MPC 1.1, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak and Mount Naomi Wildernesses – Campsites should be no closer than ½ mile apart MPC 1.2, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak and Mount Naomi Wildernesses – Campsites should be no closer than ¼ mile apart MPC 1.3, Mt. Olympus, Twin Peaks, Lone Peak, Deseret Peak and Mount Naomi Wildernesses – Campsites should be no closer than 100 feet apart Opportunities: Closeness to nature; self-reliance, high challenge and risk; little evidence of people off of trails

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	Physical	Theme: Predominately a natural evolving /natural appearing landscape character with minimal rustic improvements to protect resources Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – non-motorized trails are present closed and temporary roads may be present <i>Fishing Sites</i> – rivers, lakes, and reservoirs <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – not developed, leave no trace <i>Sanitation</i> – no facilities, leave no trace <i>Water Supply</i> – undeveloped natural <i>Signing</i> – rustic constructed of natural materials <i>Interpretation</i> – through self discovery, at trailheads
		<i>Water Crossing</i> – rustic structures or bridges made of natural materials Vegetation: Predominately natural, treatment areas exist to enhance forest health but are few and widely dispersed.
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	Managerial	Minimum or subtle signing and regulations, some encounters with rangers, motorized travel prohibited
	Social	Off Trail System: Low encounter with other parties Trails: Low to Moderate encounters with other parties Local Adjustment: Some areas are adjacent to population centers and the sights and sounds of these communities could be evident Local Adjustments for Weekends and Holidays Trails: Check with local Ranger Districts for information on trails with High encounters with other parties Camp Spacing: Usually less than 6 parties visible from a campsite Opportunities: Closeness to nature, self-reliance high to moderate challenge and risk, some evidence of others

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Semi-Primitive Motorized	Physical	Theme: Predominately a natural appearing landscape character with minimal improvements to protect resources Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – motorized trails and primitive roads (maintenance level 2 roads) <i>Fishing Sites</i> – rivers, lakes, and reservoirs with some trails and primitive roads <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – not developed, leave no trace, some identified concentrated use areas <i>Sanitation</i> – limited facilities, rustic, may have rustic outhouse available <i>Water Supply</i> – undeveloped natural, rustic developments <i>Signing</i> – rustic, made of natural materials <i>Interpretation</i> – self discovery, some located on site or at trailheads <i>Water Crossing</i> – rustic structures or bridges made of natural material, some designed for motorized use Vegetation: Treatment areas are very small in number, widely disbursed, and consistent with natural vegetation patterns.
	Managerial	Minimum or subtle on-site controls with some restrictions, motorized and mechanized travel restricted to designated travel routes, no motorized or mechanized travel allowed off designated travel routes
	Social	Motorized Travel Ways: Low to moderate contact frequency on loop travel ways, moderate contact frequency on cherry stem travel ways Local adjustment for Weekends and Holidays: Check with local Ranger Districts for information on travel ways with High encounters with other parties Concentrated Use Sites: Low to moderate group and family interaction Opportunities: Closeness to nature, high degree of challenge and risk using motorized equipment, evidence of motorized equipment on trails and primitive roads, and by audible motor sounds

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
Roaded Natural	Physical	Theme: Predominately a natural appearing and developed natural appearing landscape character with nodes and corridors of development such as campgrounds, trailheads, boat launches, small-scale resorts, and recreation residences Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – Roads (typically maintenance levels 3-5) and motorized and non-motorized trails <i>Fishing Sites</i> – rivers, lakes, reservoirs with some facilities <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – concentrated use areas and developed sites <i>Sanitation</i> – developed outhouses that blend with natural setting <i>Water Supply</i> – often developed <i>Signing</i> – Rustic with natural materials to more refined using a variety of materials such as fiberglass, metal, etc. <i>Interpretation</i> – simple roadside signs, some interpretive programs <i>Water Crossing</i> – bridges generally constructed of natural materials Vegetation: Changes (treatments) to the natural vegetation patterns are evident, but in harmony with natural environment
	Managerial	Opportunity to be with other users in developed sites, some obvious signs (information and regulation) and low to moderate likelihood of meeting Forest Service Rangers, motorized and mechanized travel restricted to designated routes, no motorized or mechanized travel allowed off designated travel routes
	Social	Developed and Concentrated Use Areas: Moderate evidence of human sights and sounds Travel Ways: Moderate to high sites and sounds of humans Opportunities: Moderate concentration of users at campsites, little challenge or risk
Rural	Physical	Theme: Predominately a altered landscapes of developed natural appearing, resort natural setting and water recreation rural appearing with natural appearing backdrops, ski resorts, campgrounds, interpretive sites, marinas, boat launch, swimming beaches, trailheads and reservoirs Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – roads (typically level 4 and 5) and trails are hardened <i>Fishing Sites</i> – some facility development <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – designed for user comfort, natural to synthetic materials that blend with the natural environment, may have hookup amenities such as hot water, electricity, and sewage disposal sites <i>Sanitation</i> – developed, design for user comfort

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	Setting	Characteristics
Rural	Physical	<i>Water Supply</i> – developed, designed for user convenience <i>Signing</i> – rustic to highly designed that harmonizes with the landscape character <i>Interpretation</i> – complex roadside signs, some staffed facilities, visitor centers, and interpretive programs <i>Water Crossing</i> – bridges of varying size that are in harmony with the landscape Vegetation: Treatment areas often dominate, but blend with natural appearing landscape by utilizing lines, forms, colors, and textures of the surrounding natural landscape
	Managerial	Obvious signing (regulation and information), education and law enforcement staff available, motorized and mechanized travel restricted to designated routes, no motorized or mechanized travel allowed off designated travel routes
	Social	Developed Use Areas and Travel Ways: High interaction among users is common Opportunities: Little challenge or risk associated with being in the outdoors
Urban	Physical	Theme: Predominately, heavy site modifications and facilities of resort natural setting and water recreation rural appearing with natural appearing backdrops; highly developed ski areas and resorts are examples of urban nodes within the National Forest system lands Infrastructure: <i>Access</i> – travel routes highly developed (typically levels 4 and 5) for motorized use often with mass transit supplements available; trails are constructed for ease of movement; majority of routes are concrete, paved, or graveled <i>Camp/Picnic Sites</i> – developed and designed for user comfort, variety of construction materials used, campsites in close proximity to each other, nearby cafés and restaurants <i>Sanitation</i> – developed and designed for user comfort, most have running water <i>Water Supply</i> – developed and designed for user comfort, many have hot water available <i>Signing</i> – natural and synthetic materials appropriate <i>Interpretation</i> – exhibits in staffed visitor centers, roadside exhibits, etc. <i>Water Crossing</i> – bridges constructed of a variety of materials, design for user convenience and safety Vegetation: Often planted, manicured and maintained
	Managerial	Intensive on-site management obvious signs and staffing, education and law enforcement available; motorized and mechanized travel restricted to designated routes; no motorized or mechanized travel allowed off designated travel routes

ROS CLASS	DESCRIPTION	
	Setting	Characteristics
	Social	Developed Areas: Opportunity to be with others; high degree of interaction with people
Urban	Social	Opportunities: Challenge and risk are unimportant except for competitive sports