

**Forest Service Manual
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 4000 - Research and Development
Chapter 4060 - Chapter Research Facilities and Areas**

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Approved by: Alexander L. Friend, Deputy Chief, Research & Development

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Responsible Staff:

Last Change:

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“Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this directive as not major, as defined by 5 U.S.C. § 804(2).”

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

4060: Revises the chapter in its entirety to align with various program updates; makes minor editorial, formatting, and technical changes throughout the chapter.

4060.03: Updates the use of Experimental Areas and specifies that this term will include “experimental forests, ranges, watersheds”. Revises language and adds statement, “In conducting these activities, NFS shall work in close consultation with Research and Development to ensure that research objectives are met.”

4062.03: Clarifies language to reflect current direction. Adds “Research may be conducted to test novel approaches to land management that fall outside current management direction and guidelines. Experimental Areas may be designated on National Forest System lands or other lands designated under agreement with the Forest Service.”

4062.04: Revises section and divides into sub-parts (4062.04a and b). Adds new roles and responsibilities and set-forth direction for Station Directors, Regional Foresters, Research Program Managers and Project Leaders, and Forest Supervisors.

4062.1: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Protection and Management Standards.

4062.11: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Resource Protection Guidelines.

4062.12: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Withdrawal from Mineral Entry, previously located at 4062.2.

4062.13: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Mineral, Oil, and Gas Leases previously located at 4062.21.

4062.14: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Scientific and Educational Use previously located at 4063.33.

4062.15: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction on Special Uses previously located at 4062.63.

4062.2: Incorporates direction on Establishment previously located at 4062.1.

4062.21: Incorporates direction which specifies that Area is replaced by Forest, Range, or Watershed, etc. in the format of the establishment record previously located at 4062.11.

4062.22: Incorporates direction that adapts the heading that must be used for designation orders. Simplifies the wording of the agreement for Experimental Areas within the National Forest System, previously located at 4062.12.

4062.23: Boundary Changes removed from 4062.3 and is now a subpart under Establishment (4062.2).

4062.24: Disestablishment removed from 4062.4 and is now a subpart under Establishment (4062.2).

4063: Defines roles of Research Natural Areas.

4063.03: Changes “natural areas” to “Research Natural Areas.” Adds “lands designated as natural areas under other ownerships” and deletes “lands under other ownerships.”

4063.04b: Clarifies roles of the Regional Research Natural Area Committee.

4063.05: Adds Wild and Scenic Rivers to examples of Congressional designations.

4063.3: Specifies that “permanent” buildings are not permitted.

4063.33: Adds that scientists conducting investigations which involve the sampling or collection of flora and/or fauna in a Research Natural Area must “obtain approval from an institutional Animal Care and Use committee when working with fish and wildlife, as appropriate.”

4063.34: Changes “management practices” to “management actions.”

4063.41: Reformats lists to “Establishment Record Contents.”

4063.44: Divides section into two separate sections, “Revision of Boundaries and Other Amendments to Establishment Record” (FSM 4063.43) and “Disestablishment” (FSM 4063.44).

4063.43: Rewords section for clarity. States that “revisions and amendments to an Establishment Record may occur as part of Forest Plan revisions or as an amendment to an existing Forest Plan.”

4063.44: Directs readers to FSM 4062.24, for procedures on the disestablishment of Experimental Areas.

4063.5: Modifies format of the Signature Page for Research Natural Area Establishment Record, replaces “Concurrence of” with “This RNA will be an important contribution to the existing network of RNAs and I concur with establishment.”

Removes sections on Management (formerly 4062.5), Administration and Use (formerly 4062.6), Timber Cutting (formerly 4062.61), Grazing (formerly 4062.62), References (formerly 4063.43), and Long-Term Watershed Installations (formerly 4064, including 4064.02, Objectives and 4064.03, Policy).

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4060.03 - Policy

Requirements of the Research and Development (R&D) programs govern the selection, development, and maintenance of research facilities, equipment, and areas, including offices, laboratories, greenhouses, Experimental Areas (including experimental forests, ranges, and watersheds), and Research Natural Areas. In response to program needs, new facilities and areas may be established, new equipment may be added or removed, and existing facilities and areas may be expanded or reduced, consolidated with other Forest Service units or other organizations, or disposed of whenever doing so would strengthen the R&D program.

Funding of all on-the-ground resource protection and management activities on Experimental Areas and Research Natural Areas within the National Forest System (NFS), including consultation, issuance of special use permits and any analyses pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) shall come from funds appropriated and allocated for the National Forest System. These tasks shall be considered to be part of the applicable Forest's integrated program of work.

In conducting these activities, NFS shall work in close consultation with R&D to ensure that research objectives are met. For obtaining appropriated Forest Pest Management Funds when necessary, see FSM 3400. Funding for research staff responsibilities outlined herein shall come from funds appropriated and allocated for R&D.

4061 - Research Construction

See FSM 7310 for direction on construction and planning for R&D projects.

4062 - Experimental Areas

4062.01 - Authority

The general provisions of the Organic Administration Act of 1897 (16 USC 551) and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Research Act of 1978 (16 USC 1643) authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to designate Experimental Areas which include Experimental Forests, Experimental Ranges, and Experimental Watersheds. Under regulations at 7 CFR 2.60(a), the Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this authority to the Chief. Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 251.23 set forth broad direction for establishing and administering Experimental Areas.

4062.02 - Objectives

Experimental Areas are lands for conducting research, demonstration, and monitoring, which inform the management of public and private forests, ranges, grasslands, and watersheds.

4062.03 - Policy

Forest Service Experimental Areas shall function as a research network with two roles. The first role is to enable scientists, Forest Service and otherwise, to conduct research and science-oriented monitoring targeted at various land management issues. The second role is to enable scientists to communicate active and completed research to managers, land owners, policy makers and society through demonstration sites embedded in Experimental Areas. Research may be conducted to test novel approaches to land management that fall outside current management direction and guidelines. Experimental Areas may be designated on National Forest System lands or other lands designated under agreement with the Forest Service.

4062.04 - Responsibility

4062.04a - Washington Office

1. Chief. The Chief reserves the authority to approve the establishment, disestablishment, or boundary changes of Experimental Areas.
2. Deputy Chief for Research and Development. The Deputy Chief for Research and Development, or their designee, is responsible for:
 - a. Keeping an establishment record for each Experimental Area.
 - b. Ensuring that each establishment record includes the designation order for the establishment and any subsequent order(s) modifying the boundaries or disestablishing the area; the legal description of the Experimental Area; a map of the Experimental Area as originally designated; and a current map incorporating changes by subsequent order(s).

4062.04b - Field Units

1. Station Directors. It is the responsibility of Station Directors, or their designee, to:
 - a. Propose the establishment, disestablishment or boundary modification of Experimental Areas to the Chief of the Forest Service with concurrence of the Deputy Chief for Research and Development. Station Directors shall receive written concurrence by the appropriate Regional Forester prior to submission of the proposal to the Chief, if National Forest System lands are involved.
 - b. Delegate responsibility, as needed, to the Research Program Manager, Project Leader, or their designee, for coordinating the preparation and completion of the establishment record and environmental document (FSM 1950) with Forest Supervisors or their designee related to the establishment, disestablishment, or modification of an Experimental Area.

- c. Approve or delegate approval, as appropriate, any research or non-research-related infrastructure and management projects and any research or non-research activities proposed by a scientist, the Forest Supervisor, or District Ranger located on Experimental Areas. Oversee written approval or disapproval of final project proposals on Experimental Areas. Sign NEPA documents (with concurrence of Forest Supervisor or their designees if the Experimental Area is on National Forest System lands).
- d. Issue orders pursuant to 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart B, to close or restrict use of all or portions of an Experimental Area if it is determined that use is incompatible with the research and demonstration objectives for which the areas was established (36 CFR 261.50).
- e. Negotiate through Tribal consultation and appropriate Memorandums of Understanding exceptions for Tribal access to ceded lands for the exercise of reserved rights.
- f. Assume primary responsibility for protection, development, and maintenance of research buildings and infrastructure that are research-related on Experimental Areas.
- g. Authorize or deny all special uses that are within an Experimental Area (FSM 4062.64), except follow FSM 4063 for any research natural areas that are designated inside the boundary of an Experimental Area.
- h. Assign a Research Program Manager, Project Leader, or appropriate designee responsibility for managing each Experimental Area, including coordinating the research, monitoring, data archiving, and demonstration activities occurring on the area.
- i. Recommend to the Regional Forester, as appropriate, the withdrawal of an Experimental Area from mineral entry.
- j. Provide written concurrence or non-concurrence with any evaluations made by the Regional Forester of any Federal mineral, oil, and gas lease proposals on Experimental Areas using standards set forth in FSM 2820. Such concurrence is required prior to the Regional Forester submitting the proposal with recommendations to the Chief of the Forest Service for the final decision.
- k. Approve or disapprove required operating plans for the exploration of non-Federal minerals, prior to the commencement of surface disturbing activities within an Experimental Area.

2. Regional Foresters. The Regional Forester has primary responsibility for protection (such as, hazard reduction, fire suppression, etc.) of Experimental Areas located within

the boundaries of a National Forest, Grassland or Prairie, and development and maintenance of roads, bridges, and improvements related to these types of infrastructure. This responsibility may be delegated to the Forest Supervisor.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Forester, or their designee, to:

- a. Review and concur or not concur with the proposal developed by the Station Director for establishing, disestablishing, or modifying the boundaries of an Experimental Area.
- b. Upon applicable concurrence, request withdrawal of an Experimental Area from mineral entry and leasing, upon the recommendation of the Station Director, using existing authorities and procedures.
- c. Evaluate any Federal mineral, oil, and gas lease proposals on Experimental Areas using standards set forth in FSM 2820 in consultation with the Station Director. Obtain Station Director written concurrence or non-concurrence prior to submitting any such proposals with recommendations to the Chief for decision.
- d. Ensure that the regional land status records reflect the establishment designation, boundary modification, or disestablishment of an Experimental Area within National Forest System lands.
- e. Assist with any Tribal consultation required to implement Executive Order 13175 and associated implementing policy (FSM 1563.11 and FSH 1509.13), and all other applicable Executive Orders or policy mandates. Identify any Tribal reserved rights to ceded lands within a proposed Experimental Area through Tribal consultation and examination of treaties and other documentation establishing such rights. Identify any sacred sites, sites of cultural significance, and/or burial sites through Tribal consultation.
- f. Obtain concurrence of the Station Director overseeing the Experimental Area before implementing new roads, bridges, culverts, or other infrastructure projects.

3. Research Program Managers and Project Leaders. The assigned Research Program Manager, Project Leader, or their designee (hereafter, Research Program Manager), manages the research installations and activities required to conduct the research program and to protect research investments in an Experimental Area. The assignment includes responsibility to:

- a. Plan, coordinate, and execute research and demonstration activities on Experimental Areas located on National Forest Systems lands. Involve partners and stakeholders, as appropriate, for the research activity.

- b. Ensure research study plans are prepared and approved for major research activities conducted within Experimental Areas. Study plan content is provided in FSM 4072.32.
- c. Use special protections consistent with Forest Service policies and procedures to safeguard experiments, demonstrations, installations, and other research activities conducted within Experimental Areas. With Station Director approval, these protections may include the partial or complete prohibition of access or use by the general public.
- d. Issue keys for gates or research infrastructure on Experimental Areas and track return of keys at the completion of research projects as part of the safeguarding of Experiment Areas and research projects.
- e. Participate in timber sale preparation and administration, provide input to contracts, and other activities needed to ensure that research objectives are met. These activities include identification of timber sale areas, silvicultural prescriptions, cutting and logging methods, rehabilitation measures, habitat management objectives, desired future conditions, and special items related to research record keeping.
- f. Discuss and plan with the appropriate Forest Supervisor or his/her designee, the necessary activities needed to maintain functional forest infrastructure on the Experimental Area.

4. Forest Supervisors. Forest Supervisors, to whom the primary responsibility to protect Experimental Areas located within the applicable boundaries of a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie, has been delegated by the Regional Forester, have primary responsibility for protection (for example, hazard reduction, fire suppression, and so forth) of the area, and for the development, maintenance, and improvements of non-research infrastructure. It is the responsibility of the Forest Supervisor or their designee to:

- a. Coordinate the implementation with the Research Program Manager for non-research activities that have been approved by the Station Director on Experimental Areas. These non-research activities could include: recreational or cultural activities; road construction and maintenance; treatment of roadside conditions to reduce fire risk and hazard trees of potential danger to the public; custodial thinning for maintenance; salvage activities after disturbance events such as windstorms, fire or insect and disease outbreaks; control of invasive weeds; issuing and monitoring special use permits authorized by the Station Director; taking corrective action in cases of permit noncompliance; and ameliorating effects of non-research uses.

- b. Suspend any non-research-related activities adjacent to Experimental Areas, within their applicable boundaries on National Forest System lands that conflict with the research and demonstration objectives of the Experimental Area.
- c. Finance operational management activities on Experimental Areas and maintain roads, boundaries, signs, gates, and other infrastructure that are not part of research-related infrastructures on Experimental Areas.
- d. Appraise, advertise, award, and administer timber sale contracts for harvests or to meet management objectives for research purposes as identified and authorized by the Station Director or their designee.
- e. Develop a fire protection plan for the Experimental Area in consultation with the Research Program Manager. The plan must be designed to meet both research and National Forest management objectives established for the area.
- f. For all projects within an Experimental Area that require NEPA, conduct analysis and prepare documents to meet NEPA requirements and associated laws for Experimental Areas located within the boundaries of a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie (FSM 1950 & FSH 1909.15). NEPA documentation should be signed by Research and Development with concurrence by National Forest System designees responsible for the project (FSM 1236.2).
- g. Organize responses to objections and appeals of NEPA project decisions in Experimental Areas.

4062.05 - Definitions

Experimental Area. An area established and administered by the Forest Service, or in agreement with cooperators, for conducting research that informs the management of public and private lands. "Research" encompasses the conduct of manipulative and observational scientific studies, and communication of research results via demonstration sites on the experimental area. For naming purposes, Experimental Areas are usually categorized by the type of landscape the Area was established to study. Typical categories include experimental forest (focus on forest management), experimental range (focus on range management), and experimental watershed (focus on water relations). Other categories may be designated in agreement with cooperators, particularly when an Area's research focus is designed to cross traditional scientific disciplines.

Recommending Official. Research Station Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Research Program Manager, Project Leader, or Research Scientist.

Study plan. A study plan includes a description of the proposed study or experiment; a review of relevant literature; a statement of specific objectives; and a description of the

field, laboratory, and administrative methods planned (FSM 4072.3). For each study plan, researchers will consider the application of results obtained from the study and identify means of minimizing environmental health and safety hazards associated with R&D and evaluate potential environmental effects (FSM 1950 and FSM 2150). Each plan should include a schedule of activities and assigned responsibility for conducting the study. Each plan will include a policy-compliant data management plan that addresses how data will be managed during the research and how data will be published for public access during the study and after its conclusion

4062.1 - Protection and Management Standards

Experimental Areas are designated for research purposes. For all authorized activities conducted on Experimental Areas, the Station Director shall have the final authority for approval of all management activities, including commercial and non-commercial timber harvest, special forest products, innocent trespass sales, and administrative free use (FSM 2404.28, exhibit 01). Forest and range management can be implemented only when the activity would be consistent with ongoing or planned future research in the area. Timber harvest may not be done solely for commercial purposes. Silvicultural treatments on Experimental Areas may deviate from existing standards and guidelines of the National Forest, pursuant to appropriate NEPA analysis and required approvals. Grazing may be allowed on Experimental Areas only for research or when it is consistent with ongoing research.

Experimental Areas shall be designated as special areas in Forest Plans to protect Experimental Areas from non-research activities that could reduce research and development value. Study plans may provide specific direction for the management of Experimental Areas (FSM 4072.3).

4062.11 - Resource Protection Guidelines

Except for policies, authorities and responsibilities outlined under FSM 4062, all resource management and protection activities should follow the applicable manual direction outlined elsewhere (FSM 2000 & FSM 5000), including for administration of timber sales, grazing, use of pesticides and herbicides, fire management, and law enforcement.

The Forest Supervisor or designee shall develop a fire management plan in consultation with the Station Director or designee for each Experimental Area. This plan should be reviewed and updated, if needed, every 5 years. The Station Director or their designee should be notified and consulted immediately if wildfire is affecting, or may affect, an Experimental Area.

4062.12 - Withdrawal from Mineral Entry

The Station Director may recommend that the Regional Forester request the withdrawal of an Experimental Area from mineral entry on federally owned lands. The Regional Forester sends a request to the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw an Experimental Area from mineral

entry pursuant to section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1714)), and in conformance with the procedures at FSM 2760.

4062.13 - Mineral, Oil, and Gas Leases

The exercise of Forest Service authority regarding the issuance of mineral leases on Experimental Areas on National Forest System lands is reserved to the Chief. The Regional Forester evaluates proposals to offer Federal mineral, oil, and gas leases on Experimental Areas, in consultation with, and with the concurrence of the Station Director, using standards set forth in FSM 2820. Concurrence of the Station Director must be obtained prior to forwarding the proposal with recommendations to the Chief. The operating plan must be reviewed by NFS and R&D and approved by the Station Director.

4062.14 - Scientific and Educational Use

Use of Experimental Areas by responsible scientists and educators is encouraged. As with all Research and Development proposals (FSM 4070), all proposals for research in Experimental Areas must be approved by the Station Director or their designee. Researchers or educators interested in using an Experimental Area must provide the Station Director with a description of the planned activity. Station Directors have the authority to approve study plans proposed by non-Forest Service scientists and execute Special Use Permits or cooperative agreements, where appropriate. Forest Service scientists shall cooperate in research conducted by non-Forest Service scientists, whenever possible, to keep informed as to the nature and progress of the work and to ensure that Experimental Areas are maintained.

Scientists conducting research on an Experimental Area must provide copies of all final research data, reports, and other pertinent documents to the Station. The final report on the results of the research project shall be provided to the Forest Service no later than one year following completion of the research. Copies of all scientific articles resulting from research on an Experimental Area shall be provided to the Forest Service to ensure long-term public access to science conducted using USDA resources. Data collected as part of research conducted on Experimental Areas shall be published or otherwise made available through the Forest Service Research Data Archive to ensure long-term public access to digital scientific data collected using USDA resources.

All activities will need review to determine compliance under NEPA requirements. All scientists conducting investigations which involve the sampling or collection of flora and/or fauna in an Experimental Area must, as a condition of approval by the Station Director to use the area:

1. Obtain appropriate permits from State and Federal agencies.
2. Obtain approval from an Institutional Animal Care and Use committee when working with fish and wildlife, as appropriate.

3. Control collection of all species carefully, especially those that are endangered, threatened, or rare.
4. Collect and deposit voucher samples of plants in a herbarium, as appropriate.

4062.15 - Special Uses

The Station Director has sole authority to authorize special uses, including for recreational activities, on all Experimental Areas. The Station Director shall authorize only those special uses that are compatible with research and development on that Experimental Area. Recreational use should be prohibited or restricted if such use threatens or interferes with the objectives or purposes for which the Experimental Area is established. If a use is prohibited or restricted on a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie, the Station Director shall coordinate restriction or closure with the Regional Forester. See FSM 2704.35 for authority to issue special use permits on Experimental Areas and FSM 2715 for fee policy.

4062.2 - Establishment

An approved establishment record is required for each Experimental Area. The establishment record and NEPA analysis and documentation (FSM 1950), as needed, may be combined. Indicate whether or not a proposed Experimental Area is located within the boundaries of a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie and whether that unit's land management plan includes the proposed Experimental Area. If not, conduct an environmental analysis (FSH 1909.15) and prepare an establishment record in combination with the required environmental document. If a separate environmental analysis is required, approval by an Environmental Coordinator within the National Headquarters must be obtained. Additionally, ensure all Tribal consultation requirements, as related to implementation of Executive Order 13175 and associated implementing policies are met (FSM 1563.11 and FSH 1509.13). The Station Director transmits the establishment record, which is enclosed in a Form FS-6200-7, Forest Service Manuscript Cover, to the Chief. The Chief's signature on the designation order completes the establishment process. The Office of the Deputy Chief for Research and Development files the original signed designation order. If the Experimental Area is located within the boundaries of a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie, the appropriate Regional Forester shall ensure that the designation and any subsequent revision of boundaries approved by the Chief are noted in the regional land status records.

4062.21 - Establishment Record Content

Establishment records shall contain the following information in the sequence given.

1. Text.
 - a. Title. The title should read, "Establishment Record for (Name of Experimental Area)" where Area is replaced by Forest, Range, or Watershed, etc.

- b. Subtitle. The subtitle should read, "(Name) National Forest", if National Forest System (NFS) land is involved. If NFS land is not involved, the subtitle should give the name of the owner, the location (City and State), and the type of use or ownership; for example, "Lands Leased from the X Paper Company in Clay County, Illinois," or "Lands Administered by the Forest Service in Pike County, Mississippi."
 - c. Purpose of Establishment.
 - d. Area by Plant Cover Types.
 - e. Physical and Climatic Conditions.
 - f. Description of and Effect Upon Land and Resource Values.
 - (1) Timber.
 - (2) Watershed.
 - (3) Forage.
 - (4) Minerals.
 - (5) Recreation.
 - (6) Water Use.
 - (7) Cultural and Heritage Values.
 - (8) Other Uses or Values, including Tribal.
 - g. Accessibility.
 - h. Existing Facilities.
 - i. Arrangements for Management, Administration, and Protection.
 - j. Recommendation. The entry should read, "Establishment of the (Name) Experimental (Forest, Range, Watershed, etc.) for the described purposes is recommended by the following:"
 - k. Dates and Signatures. The Recommending Officials and the Station Director should sign and date the establishment record. If the land is within the National Forest System, the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester should also concur and date the establishment record.
2. Map. A map that shows the location, the boundaries, and the ownership of the proposed Experimental Area shall be included. Ensure that the boundaries of the

Experimental Area are clearly identifiable in the field and in the establishment record. Accurately depict boundaries, ideally with a surveyor's legal description, on maps that are used for Forest Service R&D and NFS administrative purposes. All Experimental Area boundaries should be accurately depicted in the land status record system (FSM 5590) to guarantee that Forest staffs are aware of their locations.

3. Photographs or Illustrations. Show typical conditions of the landscape.

4. Designation Order. (FSM 4062.22).

4062.22 - Designation Order

Use the following heading: "An Order establishing (Name)"

1. If the Experimental Area is within the National Forest System, use the following wording:

"By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Research Act of 1978, at 16 USC 1643, 7 CFR 2.60(a) and 36 CFR 251.23, I hereby designate as the (Name) the lands described in the preceding establishment record prepared by (Name of Recommending Official), dated _____, 20____. These lands shall hereafter be administered as an Experimental Area (Forest, Range, or Watershed), subject to the regulations at 36 CFR 251.23 and policies and procedures issued thereunder.

Chief

Date

2. If the Experimental Area is not within the National Forest System, use the following wording:

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Research Act of 1978, at 16 USC 1643 and 7 CFR 2.60(a), I hereby designate as the (Name) Experimental (Forest, Range, or Watershed) the lands described in the preceding establishment record prepared by (Name of Recommending Official), dated _____, 20____. These lands shall hereafter be administered as an Experimental Area under policies and procedures established by the Forest Service.

Chief

Date

3. If the proposed Experimental Area (Forest, Range, or Watershed) includes both National Forest System lands and other public or private lands, use the following wording:

By virtue of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Research Act of 1978, at 16 USC 1643, 7 CFR 2.60(a) and 36 CFR 251.23, I hereby designate as the (Name) Experimental (Forest, Range, or Watershed) the lands described in the preceding establishment record prepared by (Name of Recommending Official), dated _____, 20____. These lands shall hereafter be administered as an Experimental Area, subject to the regulations at 36 CFR 251.23 and instructions issued thereunder by the Secretary of Agriculture and/or the Chief of the Forest Service.

Chief

Date

4062.23 - Boundary Changes

To revise the boundaries of Experimental Areas, the Station Director submits a designation statement for the Chief's approval. Following is a sample designation statement that revises the boundaries of an Experimental Area (forest, range, or watershed) on National Forest System land:

Order Revising the Boundaries of the (Name) Experimental (Forest, Range, or Watershed)

By virtue of the authority vested in me by 7 CFR 2.60(a) and 36 CFR 251.23 of the Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture, I hereby order that the lands described in the preceding establishment record by (Name of Recommending Official), dated _____, 20____, be designated as a part of (or be removed from) the (Name) Experimental (Forest, Range, or Watershed).

Chief

Date

The Deputy Chief for Research and Development files the signed designation statement with the original designation order as part of the establishment record. A legal description and map of the area being added or removed must accompany the order revising the boundary of the Experimental Area.

4062.24 - Disestablishment

When it is no longer possible to justify retention of an Experimental Area (forest, range, or watershed), the Station Director prepares for the Chief's consideration a proposal to terminate the designation. A disestablishment record shall:

1. Refer to the original establishment record.
2. Report the use that has been made of the area.
 - a. Summarize the research work.
 - b. Report the facilities and infrastructure.
3. State reasons for the termination and the rationale used in the decision process.
4. Include a plan for future use of the area such as transfer, sale, or other means of disposal.
5. Present the disestablishment recommendation.
6. Ensure the document contains the following date and signature blocks:

Submitted: _____
Title (Recommending Official) (Date)

Concurred : _____
Station Director, Station (Date)

Concurred: _____

Regional Forester, Region (Date)

If none of the land is within the National Forest System, concurrence by the Regional Forester is not needed and that concurrence block may be omitted.

Approved: _____
Chief (Date)

The Deputy Chief for Research and Development files the original signed copy with the original establishment record. The Regional Forester ensures that regional lands status records reflect the disestablishment if the Experimental Area is within a National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie.

4063 - Research Natural Areas

Research Natural Areas are part of a national network of ecological areas designated in perpetuity for research and education and/or to maintain biological diversity on National Forest System lands. Research Natural Areas are principally for non-manipulative research, observation, and study of the environment and ecosystems in their natural state. They also may assist in implementing provisions of special acts, such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the monitoring provisions of the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

4063.01 - Authority

The general provisions of the Organic Administration Act of 1897 (16 U.S.C. 551) authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to designate Research Natural Areas. Under regulations at 7 CFR 2.60 (a), the Secretary has delegated this authority to the Chief, who, pursuant to 36 CFR 251.23, selects and establishes Research Natural Areas as part of the continuing land and resource management planning process for National Forest System lands (36 CFR 219.25 and FSM 1922).

4063.02 - Objectives

The objectives of establishing Research Natural Areas are to:

1. Maintain a wide spectrum of high quality representative areas that represent the major forms of variability found in forest, shrub land, grassland, alpine, and other natural systems that have scientific interest and importance that, in combination, form a national network of ecological areas for research, education, and maintenance of biological diversity.
2. Preserve and maintain genetic diversity, including threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.
3. Protect against human-caused environmental disruptions.
4. Serve as reference areas for the study of natural ecological processes including disturbance and climate change.
5. Provide onsite and extension educational activities.
6. Serve as baseline areas for measuring long-term ecological changes.
7. Serve as control areas for comparing results from manipulative research.
8. Monitor effects of resource management techniques and practices.

4063.03 - Policy

Research Natural Areas may be used only for research and development, study, observation, monitoring, and those educational activities that do not modify the conditions for which the Research Natural Area was established.

The selection and establishment of Research Natural Areas within the National Forest System primarily emerges from continuing land and resource management planning and associated environmental analyses (FSM 1920 and FSM 1950). Forest plans shall include analysis of, and recommendations for, the establishment of proposed Research Natural Areas. Where proposals to establish Research Natural Areas arise outside of the forest planning process, the affected Forest Supervisor shall prepare, as part of an establishment record (FSM 4063), a forest plan amendment in accordance with land management planning regulations (36 CFR 219.10(f) and FSM 1922.5) and environmental analysis policy and procedures (FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15).

Unless catastrophic circumstances significantly alter the conditions for which a Research Natural Area was originally created such that it no longer may serve that function, the designation of a Research Natural Area shall be in perpetuity.

The Forest Service shall cooperate with universities, private and professional organizations, and State and other public agencies to establish and maintain a national network of Research Natural Areas on Federally-administered lands, as well as lands designated as natural areas under other ownerships.

Funding of all on-the-ground resource protection and management activities on Research Natural Areas within the National Forest System, including consultation, issuance of special use permits and any NEPA analyses shall come from funds appropriated and allocated for the National Forest System. These tasks shall be considered to be part of the Forest's integrated program of work.

For obtaining appropriated Forest Pest Management Funds when necessary, see FSM 3400. Funding for research staff responsibilities outlined herein shall come from funds appropriated and allocated for Research and Development.

4063.04 - Responsibility

4063.04a - Washington Office

1. Chief. The Chief reserves the authority to determine what important forest, aquatic, and range types are needed for a national network of Research Natural Areas (36 CFR 251.23), and to maintain quality among the Regions and Stations in the establishment and management of Research Natural Areas through oversight and common standards.

2. Deputy Chiefs. The Deputy Chief for Research and Development and the Deputy Chief for National Forest System have the responsibility to review the Research Natural Area program. As part of their review, the Deputy Chiefs are responsible for identifying important forest and range types needed for the national network of Research Natural Areas and recommending approval of these types to the Chief.

3. Responsible Staff Director. The Washington Office, Director of Sustainable Forest Management Research is responsible for maintaining a national record of all Research Natural Areas.

4063.04b - Field Units

1. Regional Foresters and Station Directors. It is the responsibility of Regional Forester and Station Directors, to:

- a. Approve New Research Natural Areas. It is the responsibility of Regional Foresters, with the concurrence of Station Directors, to approve all new Research Natural Areas and to sign the implementing designation order. This authority may not be delegated.
- b. Establish a Regional Research Natural Area Committee. It is the responsibility of Regional Foresters and Station Directors to establish a Regional Research Natural Area committee to help determine needs for Research Natural Areas within each Region and each National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie.
- c. Approve Management Plans and Oversee and Coordinate Research on Research Natural Areas. In consultation with Forest Supervisors or designee, Station Directors have authority to approve all management plans and to oversee and coordinate approved research on all established Research Natural Areas and proposed Research Natural Areas in approved Forest Plans, except for those Research Natural Areas in congressionally designated areas (FSM 4063.05).
- d. Concur on Issuance of Mineral Leases. The authority to concur in issuance of mineral leases including access to Research Natural Areas on National Forest System lands is reserved to the Regional Forester, in consultation with and with the concurrence of the Station Director.
- e. Approve Management Plans and Oversee and Coordinate Research on Research Natural Areas in Congressionally-Designated Areas. The authority to approve management plans and to oversee and coordinate approved research on Research Natural Areas in Congressionally-designated areas (FSM 4063.05) rests with Regional Foresters (FSM 2323.04c). In exercising this authority, they have the responsibility to coordinate plans for research with Station Directors. The Regional Forester, with the concurrence of the appropriate Station Director, has the responsibility to prepare recommendations to the Chief for any proposed Federal mineral, oil, and

gas leases on Research Natural Areas that are acquired land (FSM 2820) and on any oil and gas lease on National Forest System lands created from the public domain.

f. Approve Plans for Temporary Gauging Stations and Instrument Shelters. Only the Station Director, after consultation with the Forest Supervisor (paragraph 4), has the responsibility to approve plans for temporary gauging stations and instrument shelters (FSM 4063.31).

g. Establish and Maintain a System for Archiving Data and Reports from Research Natural Areas. The Station Director has the responsibility to establish and maintain a system for archiving data and reports from Research Natural Areas in a manner that facilitates the exchange and transfer of information among Stations, scientists, and the National Forest System.

2. Regional Research Natural Area Committee. This informal partnership is composed of representatives selected by Regional Foresters and Station Directors (paragraph 1b) and may include personnel from other government agencies and non-government organizations associated with managing natural areas. It is the responsibility of this committee to share information and experiences that can be used to help identify the need for Research Natural Areas on National Forest System lands. Committee members may also assist in the preparation of establishment records.

3. Research and Development Project Leaders and Program Managers. It is the responsibility of Project Leaders and Program Managers, as appropriate, to coordinate with Forest Supervisors on any planned research activities within, and adjacent to, Research Natural Areas.

4. Forest Supervisors. It is the responsibility of Forest Supervisors to:

- a. Execute approved management plans for Research Natural Areas.
- b. Administer, manage, and protect Research Natural Areas.
- c. Coordinate with the Station Director or Director's designee to implement needed changes in management or protection.

The authority to approve mining plans of operations is reserved to the Forest Supervisor in consultation with, and concurrence of, the Station Director.

5. District Rangers. District Rangers are responsible for direct administration, protection, and, in accordance with approved forest plans and/or project prescriptions, management of established Research Natural Areas.

4063.05 - Definitions

Research Natural Area. As defined by the Federal Committee on Ecological Reserves (FSM 4063.43, para.1): A physical or biological unit in which current natural conditions are maintained insofar as possible. These conditions are ordinarily achieved by allowing natural physical and biological processes to prevail without human intervention. However, under certain circumstances, deliberate manipulation may be used to restore or maintain the features and ecological processes that the Research Natural Area was established to protect.

Special Management Areas. Certain lands within the National Forest System designated administratively or by Congress for special management consideration. Examples of administratively designated areas include Archeological Areas, Historical Areas, Geological Areas, Scenic Areas, National Recreation Trails, and Research Natural Areas. Examples of Congressional designations include Wilderness, National Primitive Areas, National Recreation Areas, National Scenic-Research Areas, National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

4063.1 - Size Standards

Research Natural Areas must be large enough to provide essentially unmodified conditions within their interiors which are necessary in accordance with the objectives stated in the establishment record (FSM 4063.02), and to protect the ecological processes, features, and/or qualities for which the Research Natural Areas were established. Landscape-scale Research Natural Areas that incorporate several ecosystem elements are ideal, where feasible.

4063.2 - Selection

Whenever possible, select proposed areas that show no evidence of major disturbances by humans, such as livestock grazing or timber cutting, for the past 50 years. Where possible, select entire small drainages because they maintain interrelationships of terrestrial and aquatic systems. These drainages are particularly valuable as baseline areas for Research and Development and monitoring and are easier to delineate and protect on the ground.

In the selection of representative areas, a pristine condition is the goal. However, when candidate areas in a pristine condition are unavailable, then areas that reflect the pristine condition as closely as possible may be selected.

In certain geographic regions and in certain community types, it may be impossible to find candidate areas not containing exotic plant or animal life. Under these circumstances, the best available area that qualifies in all other respects should be chosen.

Failure to withdraw an area from mineral entry should not be viewed as a deterrent to selection and establishment of a desirable Research Natural Area (FSM 4063.35).

4063.21 - Mapping and Recording

Ensure that the boundaries of Research Natural Areas are clearly identifiable in the field and in the establishment record. Accurately depict boundaries, ideally with a surveyor's legal description, on maps that are used for Forest Service R&D and NFS administrative purposes. All Research Natural Area boundaries should be accurately depicted in the land status record system (FSM 5590) to guarantee that Forest staffs are aware of locations.

4063.3 - Protection and Management Standards

Standards for protection and management of a Research Natural Area must support and promote the basic objectives and purposes of establishing the area. Ensure that the establishment record clearly states the objectives for establishing the area and identifies the special values for which the area is being recognized (FSM 4063.41). In addition, comply with the standards described in paragraphs 1-7.

1. Ecological Processes. The prime consideration in managing Research Natural Areas is maintenance of natural conditions and processes. To the extent practicable, protect Research Natural Areas against human activities that directly or indirectly modify the integrity of the ecological processes.
2. Logging and Wood Gathering. Do not permit logging or wood gathering activities in Research Natural Areas unless required for restoration of an area to natural conditions and processes.
3. Livestock. In Research Natural Areas where livestock grazing is not part of the management prescription, the Regional Forester and Station Director have the responsibility, as appropriate, to establish a level of acceptable casual or incidental livestock use that can be tolerated and is consistent with the management prescription for the Research Natural Area (4063.04b). Where grazing is needed to establish or maintain vegetative communities, define objectives for grazing.
4. Exotic Plants and Animal Life. Remove exotic plants or animals to the extent practicable. Where pest management activities are prescribed, be as specific as possible against target organisms and induce minimal impact to other components of the ecosystem. The release of biological control organisms for exotic species control should be carefully considered to avoid the introduction of other exotic species.
5. Recreational Use. Recreational use should be restricted or prohibited if such use threatens or interferes with the objectives or purposes for which the Research Natural Area is established.
6. Special Orders. Where special orders are needed to limit, restrict, or control specific activities such as camping, seasons of use or other uses, that are not compatible with the objectives of the Research Natural Area, the Forest Supervisor issues orders

pursuant to 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart B, to protect an area's features. Any such orders shall incorporate the special closure provisions of 36 CFR 261.53. (See FSM 5353 for penalties applicable to violations of orders.)

7. Roads, Trails, Fences, Signs, or Buildings. Do not permit new roads, trails, fences, or signs on an established Research Natural Area unless they contribute to the objectives or to the protection of the area. Boundary fencing is permitted for protection against livestock or excessive human use. Permanent buildings are not permitted. In rare instances, temporary gauging stations and instrument shelters may be desirable. Follow procedures set forth at FSM 4063.31 for authorizing temporary physical improvements.

4063.31 - Authorizing Temporary Physical Improvements

In approving plans for temporary gauging stations and instrument shelters (FSM 4063.04b), the Station Director ensures that these plans specifically fix the tenure of the facility, list actions to be taken, assign time limits for completion of actions, and identify parties responsible for returning disturbed areas to a natural condition.

4063.32 - Resource Protection Guidelines

Specific management direction for Research Natural Areas must contain measures to address fire, insect, disease, and animal activity. As a general guide, minimum impact suppression tactics (MIST) should be used during fire and for post-fire restoration activities. The Station Director or their designee should be notified and consulted immediately if wildfire may impact a research natural area. Allow fires to burn only when it is a normally occurring disturbance that helps maintain ecological processes at the site, or within a prescription designed to accomplish objectives of the specific natural area. The Forest Supervisor shall develop a fire management plan in consultation with the Station Director for each Research Natural Area. This plan should be reviewed and updated, as needed, every 5 years. Take no actions against endemic insects, diseases, wild plants, or animals unless the Regional Forester and Station Director deem such action necessary to protect the features for which the Research Natural Area was established or to protect adjacent resources. If exotic plants or animals have been introduced into an established Research Natural Area, the Station Director and the Regional Forester exercise control measures that are in keeping with established management principles and standards to eradicate them, when practicable (FSM 4063.3).

In protecting Research Natural Areas within congressionally designated areas (FSM 4063.05), the management direction for the Research Natural Area must meet statutory mandates (FSM 1920).

Follow the provisions set forth in FSM 2360 where the Research Natural Area is likely to involve cultural resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

4063.33 - Scientific and Educational Use

Encourage the use of Research Natural Areas by responsible scientists and educators. Do not authorize educational use of the Research Natural Area if it is probable that such use may cause unacceptable impacts on the values for which the Research Natural Area was established.

As with all Research and Development proposals (FSM 4070), all proposals for research in Research Natural Areas must be approved by the Station Director or their designee. Scientists interested in using a Research Natural Area must provide the appropriate Station Director with a description of the research activity planned. With respect to non-Forest Service scientists, Station Directors have the authority to approve study plans proposed by non-Forest Service scientists and sign Special Use Permits or cooperative agreements, where appropriate. Activities that will cause ground disturbances will need review by the District Ranger to determine compliance under NEPA requirements. The scientist must provide the Station Director and Regional Forester with copies of all data, reports, and publications resulting from the research including theses, dissertations, articles, monographs, and so forth. The final report on the results of the research project shall be submitted to the Forest Service no later than one year following completion of the research.

Access to a Research Natural Area by parties external to the Forest Service may be authorized and approved by the District Ranger and shall conform to conditions specified in approved study plans and/or cooperative agreements. For direction on research in wilderness areas, see FSM 2323.

Forest Service scientists shall cooperate in research conducted by non-Forest Service scientists, whenever possible, to keep informed as to the nature and progress of the work and to ensure that Research Natural Area values are maintained. Scientists conducting research on a Research Natural Area must file copies of all research data, reports, and other pertinent documents with the Station, Region, and Forest.

All scientists conducting investigations which involve the sampling or collection of flora and/or fauna in a Research Natural Area must, as a condition of approval by the Station Director (or Regional Forester in congressionally designated areas (FSM 4063.05)) to use the area:

1. Obtain appropriate permits from State and Federal agencies.
2. Obtain approval from an Institutional Animal Care and Use committee when working with fish and wildlife, as appropriate.
3. Control collection of all species carefully, especially those that are endangered, threatened, or rare.
4. Collect and deposit voucher samples of plants in a herbarium, as appropriate.

4063.34 - Vegetation Management

Use only tried and reliable vegetation management techniques. Apply the techniques only where the vegetative type would be lost or degraded without management. The criterion is that management practices must provide a closer approximation of the naturally occurring vegetation and natural processes governing the vegetation than would be possible without management.

The Station Director, with the concurrence of the Forest Supervisor, may authorize management actions that are necessary for invasive weed control or to preserve the vegetation for which the Research Natural Area was created (FSM 4063.3). These practices may include grazing, thinning, control of excessive animal populations, prescribed burning, and post-fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) work. Take extra care to protect rare vegetation types that are shade-intolerant, structurally complex, or late-successional with infrequent canopy-disturbing events.

4063.35 - Withdrawal from Mineral Entry

The Regional Forester may ask the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw a Research Natural Area from mineral entry after its establishment in conformance with section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 2743, 43 U.S.C. 1701, FSM 2761, and FSM 4063.2).

4063.36 - Mineral, Oil, and Gas Leases

The Regional Forester, with concurrence of the Station Director, evaluates proposals to offer Federal mineral, oil, and gas leases on Research Natural Areas using standards set forth in FSM 2820. The proposal with recommendation is forwarded by the Regional Forester to the Chief for the final decision.

4063.37 - Surveying and Monumenting Boundaries

Where a Research Natural Area boundary is on a Forest Service property line that adjoins a non-Forest Service ownership property, this segment of the Research Natural Area boundary should be surveyed and monumented under the direction of the forest land surveyor.

4063.4 - Establishment

Document each recommended Research Natural Area with an establishment record, ecological evaluation, NEPA environmental assessment (FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15), and relevant sections of the current Forest Plan or Plan Amendment.

4063.41 - Establishment Record Content

Include all of the following information, in the sequence listed, in an establishment record for a recommended Research Natural Area. Where a particular item does not pertain to the recommended Research Natural Area, enter a brief statement explaining why it does not apply. Do not omit any item or leave the subject area blank. Use English units and then metric equivalents in parentheses throughout the record. Enclose the entire content in Form FS-6200-7, Manuscript Cover.

1. Identification Section. As a minimum, this section must include:
 - a. Title Page. Include the establishment record for (name of RNA) Research Natural Area within (name) National Forest, (county), (State). See FSM 4063.5, exhibit 01 for the format.
 - b. Location Map. A road or forest map showing the location of the RNA with respect to the nearest city and the Ranger District office, with recommended access routes to the area.
 - c. Boundary Map. A United States Geological Survey 7 1/2 minute quad map, or a digital map at a scale approximating 2 inches per mile (32 mm/km), showing boundaries and ownership status of the recommended area with roads and trails.
 - d. Legal Description. Government land office, metes and bounds system, or digital boundaries. Include the number of acres and hectares of the entire area. The boundary description should be reviewed and approved by a forest land surveyor and entered into the Forest Service Automated Land and Property Records System.
2. Administrative. Each Research Natural Area to be established must be documented with a signature page and a Designation Order.
 - a. Signature Page. See FSM 4063.5 Exhibit 02 for format.
 - b. Designation Order. This is a separate, written instrument by which the Regional Forester, with concurrence of the Station Director, officially designates an area as a Research Natural Area.

Prepare a Designation Order using the language and format consistent with FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15 for Research Natural Areas both within and outside of congressionally designated areas.

3. Text.

a. Introduction. Include historical background, uses, and ownership. Identify if the proposed area is within designated wilderness, wild and scenic river, national recreation area, or other congressionally designated areas (FSM 4063.05).

b. Justification Section.

(1) Justification Statement. Explain why the recommended Research Natural Area is worthy of consideration.

(2) Principal Distinguishing Features. Briefly describe the distinguishing features of the Research Natural Area with emphasis on the terrestrial and aquatic communities, geology, flora, and fauna. This modest ecological description should briefly provide information on vegetation type, habitat characteristics, threatened and endangered species, and so forth.

(3) Objectives. State the objectives that are to be achieved with this Research Natural Area. The objectives should be based upon the elements and values that the area contains and should reflect how the Research Natural Area can best serve the objectives listed under FSM 4063.02.

c. Land Management Planning. Indicate whether or not the Research Natural Area is included in the analysis and recommendations section in the Forest Plan (Land and Resources Management Plan). If not, refer to the Forest Plan amendment when making the recommendation.

d. Management Prescription. Identify management prescriptions designed to ensure maintenance of the objectives for which the Research Natural Area is recommended to be established. (Include prescription information from the Forest Plan.)

e. Use or Control of Fire and Grazing. Describe if prescribed burning and livestock grazing is used to maintain ecological conditions and explain the use. Include the prescription for fire in and near the Research Natural Area, the use of prescribed fire, and the control of natural fire. If parts of the Research Natural Area are assigned for eventual prescribed burning, describe these as well as areas assigned for permanent protection from fire. To control fire within Research Natural Areas, use those methods that cause the least disturbance, following minimum impact suppression tactics where practicable. Normally, do not use methods that employ machinery.

In developing the prescription for fire, consider the role of natural fire in sustaining or managing the vegetation. The prescribed fire should be conducted to mimic natural conditions.

4. Appendices.

a. Appendix 1 - Ecological Evaluation. The ecological evaluation provides the initial baseline information for the Research Natural Area, serves as a source of data for reports on the Research Natural Area program, and provides information to researchers seeking appropriate research sites or projects. At a minimum, the evaluation should include the following:

(1) Physical Site Description and Climatic Conditions. Location (forest, district, and county; latitude and longitude; size in acres and hectares; elevation range; access to the site; and climatic data. Obtain temperature and precipitation information from the nearest weather station. Identify the name and location of the station, also. If local climatic conditions vary greatly from the nearest weather station, ensure this is stated, also.

(2) Ecological Description. Eco-region (to the lowest level of detail currently available); detailed descriptions and approximate size in acres and hectares of the plant community types on the site, including potential climax types. Use an accepted regional or statewide classification system for the description and include a map of the plant communities using the same classification system. Also, provide descriptions and extent of plant communities following the National Vegetation Classification System published by the National Geographic Data Committee.

(3) Description of the values of the Research Natural Area. Flora list, by both common and scientific names; fauna list (those species expected to occur), by both common and scientific names; geology; soils; topography; aquatic and riparian features; rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species; list of rare elements and rare plant communities.

(4) Resource Information. Describe in detail known information about the applicable resources, especially from the vantage of potentially conflicting uses, such as minerals, grazing, plants (including timber and special forest products), watershed values, recreation use, wildlife, transportation and road system, adjacent lands, fences and protective barriers.

(5) Historical Information. Include, in this section, known information regarding the following: history of establishment, research and education use and interest, cultural and heritage, disturbance history, occurrence of exotic species.

(6) Management Recommendations on the Research Natural Area. Evaluate specific management recommendations such as principal management issues; potential or existing conflicts; and special management area if the Research Natural Area is within one.

(7) Other Information. Include any permanent research plots and/or photo points, potential research topics, and administration records and protection.

(8) Bibliography. Include journal articles or publications that have resulted from study conducted on the site and all literature cited in the report. Cite any important reports which describe the various aspects of the area (flora, fauna, geology, history, soils, and so forth).

(9) Photographs. Photographs may be included and embedded within the body of text. However, ensure that each photograph is clearly labeled. The location of the digital copy or negative should be noted, also.

b. Appendix 2 - A written NEPA environmental assessment shall be included based on FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15

c. Appendix 3 - A copy of the relevant sections in the Forest Land Management Plan or Amendment pertaining to the establishment and management of the Research Natural Area.

4063.42 - Assembly, Approval, and Filing

Avoid confusion and ensure consistency in the assembly, approval, and filing of the establishment record content for a recommended Research Natural Area, by following these guidelines:

1. Assembly. The original and 2 copies of the establishment record for recommended Research Natural Areas should be assembled in the order listed in 4063.41 using manuscript cover Form FS-6200-7.
2. Approval. The designation order, signed and dated by the Regional Forester, with concurrence of the Station Director, indicates approval for the establishment of the recommended Research Natural Area.
3. Filing. Send the original establishment record to the Washington Office Director of the Vegetation Management and Protection Research Staff where it is filed. Ensure that one of the copies, including the signed designation order, is retained by the Regional Forester and the other one by the Station Director. The Regional Forester should also ensure that the designation order is noted in the landownership record at the Regional Office (FSM 5491.24).
4. Timeline. The establishment record documents should be completed within 3 years after a Research Natural Area is formally proposed in an approved Forest Plan.

The appropriate Station Director or Regional Forester ensures that a copy of the establishment record is sent to the Forest Supervisor, District Ranger, and Research Project Leader, or

equivalent, of the recommended Research Natural Area as permanent files. For Research Natural Areas within wilderness, a copy of the establishment record should be attached to the management direction document for that wilderness.

4063.43 - Revision of Boundaries and Other Amendments to Establishment Record

Boundary revisions or other amendments to establishment records may occur using the same authorities as the establishment of a Research Natural Area (including designation order, signed and dated by the Regional Forester, with concurrence of the Station Director). Revisions and amendments to an Establishment Record may occur as part of a Forest Plan revision or as an amendment to an existing Forest Plan. Approved revisions should be included as part of existing establishment record documentation.

4063.44 - Disestablishment

For disestablishment of a Research Natural Area, follow the same procedures as disestablishment of Experimental Areas (FSM 4062.24), with the Chief approving final disestablishment.

4063.5 - Exhibits

See the following exhibits for implementing the establishment and management policy of Research Natural Areas:

1. Exhibit 01 - Title Page.
2. Exhibit 02 - Signature Page for Research Natural Area Establishment Record.

4063.5 - Exhibit 01

TITLE PAGE

Establishment Record for the _____ (Name of Research Natural Area)
Research Natural Area within the _____ (Name)
National Forest, _____, _____. (County) (State)

Forest Service Manual 4000 - Research and Development
Chapter 4060 - Chapter Research Facilities and Areas
Amendment: 4000-2019-1
Effective date: September 11, 2019
4063.5 - Exhibit 02

SIGNATURE PAGE

for

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA ESTABLISHMENT RECORD

(Name of the) Research Natural Area

(Name of the) National Forest, Grassland, or Prairie

(Name of the County and State)

The undersigned certify that all applicable land management planning
and environmental analysis requirements have been met and that
boundaries are clearly identified in accordance with
FSM 4063.21, Mapping and Recordation, and FSM 4063.41,
Establishment Record Content, in arriving at this recommendation.

Prepared by _____ Date _____
(Typed name, title, and affiliation of
person who prepared the report)

Recommended by _____ Date _____
(Typed name), District Ranger, _____ District

Recommended by _____ Date _____
(Typed name), Forest Supervisor, _____ National Forest

This RNA will be an important contribution to the existing network of RNAs and I
concur with establishment.

_____ Date _____
(Typed name), Station Director, _____ Station