

San Juan Plan Revision Management Themes Working DRAFT (2/17/05)

THEME 1 NATURAL PROCESSES DOMINATE

In these areas natural processes operate relatively free from the influence of humans with the existing landscape character gradually changing over time through natural processes. Resources are managed to perpetuate semi-primitive to pristine conditions. This theme includes **designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study areas, Wild River designation/ eligible areas and other special/primitive areas**. Lands must be a minimum of 5,000 acres or be contiguous with other wilderness/undeveloped areas to qualify for Theme 1 management.

- Ecological processes such as fire, insects and disease are allowed to operate essentially free from the influence of humans. Vegetation composition and structure result predominately from natural succession and non-native vegetation is rare.
- Visitors will be self-reliant and should expect low levels of contact with other people.
- Few if any human-made facilities and structural improvements are present.
- **Oil and gas leasing** and locatable minerals is not authorized except for valid existing leases or claims
- **Travel** is non-mechanized and non-motorized with rare exceptions of winter motorized travel and mechanized use outside of designated Wilderness areas. A minor amount of motorized use may be needed to restore desired conditions in restoration areas.
- **Livestock grazing** where currently established will continue and is carefully managed to maintain the integrity of rangeland and riparian systems.

THEME 2 SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

These areas are managed to protect or enhance areas with unusual characteristics, including areas such as **Research Natural Areas, special biological or geological areas, cultural/historical areas or other special designations**. These lands vary in size from a few hundred to several thousand acres. Management emphasis is on protecting or enhancing, and where appropriate conducting research, developing and interpreting for public education these areas of unusual characteristics. Intensity of management will vary based on the area objectives.

- Theme 2 areas help ensure conservation of ecosystems that may provide important contributions to the overall sustainability of larger landscapes.
- These areas are managed for particular objectives and are often formally designated. A specific management strategy is developed for each site.
- Human influences on ecological processes or special resources are limited to the degree possible, but sometimes in the case of interpretation and research are evident.
- The type of human use can vary, however it is generally not intensive.
- The balance of **management activity** favors elimination of uses that are incompatible with the area's primary management objective. However, uses such as **grazing, thinning**, etc. may be used to meet vegetation management objectives if appropriate. Term grazing permits would not be granted in a Theme 2.
- **Travel** is generally non-motorized, however a minor amount of motorized use may be needed to meet area management objectives.

THEME 3

NATURAL LANDSCAPES WITH LIMITED MANAGEMENT

The natural character of the landscape is emphasized; resource management activities may occur, but natural ecological processes and resulting patterns will predominate with the majority of users viewing the area as natural. Although these areas are characterized primarily by natural-appearing landscapes, some various management tools may be used to restore or maintain natural ecological processes. This will result in some evidence of human activities. Overall, the landscape character will be influenced by both direct and indirect human activities, but appears natural to the majority of viewers.

- Resource management activities such as **timber harvest for restoration, grazing, and mineral leasing** may be conducted, but management objectives favor natural ecological processes.
- **Oil and gas** leasing may be allowed. Controlled surface use, timing restrictions and/or No Surface Occupancy are employed to protect natural setting and wildlife habitat.
- These areas may include eligible or designated as scenic rivers.
- In some areas, users will experience considerable isolation from the sights and sounds of people in a setting that offers considerable challenge and risk.
- Recreation amenities and facilities are developed to reduce impacts to the natural resource, e.g., a toilet facility to reduce impacts from dispersed use.
- **Travel:** Generally motorized travel is not common and is limited to designated routes. Restrictions on motorized travel both summer and winter may vary from area to area. New routes, motorized and non-motorized, may be created.
- **Vegetative manipulation** is allowed to reduce fuel loads, or to restore natural conditions.
- **Livestock grazing and rangeland management**, though common, is managed to maintain the integrity of rangeland and riparian systems. Current rangeland infrastructure will be maintained and accessed, but the development of new infrastructure is not common.

THEME 4 RECREATION EMPHASIS AREAS

Lands are managed to emphasize recreation opportunities while maintaining the natural landscape. These areas typically are centered on recreational destinations, transportation corridors or bodies of water. Examples range from developed scenic byways and recreation areas to relatively undeveloped natural areas often near natural attractions such as streams suitable or designated as recreational rivers and lakes. A variety of recreation activities occur ranging from developed facilities to unstructured activities such as fishing, hiking, etc.

- Resource uses (such as: **livestock grazing, timber management, wildlife management**) are not emphasized and therefore have little impact on ecological conditions.
- **Oil and gas leasing** may be allowed but limited to protect the natural setting and recreation experience (controlled surface use, timing restrictions and/or No Surface Occupancy). Recreation facilities may be withdrawn from mineral entry.
- Recreation facilities such as campgrounds, day facilities, boat docks, trailheads, etc. are the main attraction for people. Resource impacts can occur from facility development and hardened surfaces at recreation sites.
- Human use is recreation-oriented; potential for contact with other users is high. Sights and sounds of people on the site are expected and may even be desired.
- Generally **motorized travel** is common but maybe limited to designated routes. New routes may be created.
- Various management activities are allowed but limited to be compatible with the recreation setting public safety and stewardship objectives.

THEME 5 ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

These lands are managed with a strong multiple-use emphasis on various resource objectives. These areas are often characterized by substantially modified natural environment, and include areas that are currently and can potentially provide wood fiber production, energy production, and forage and browse production. Management is usually a combination of livestock grazing, timber production, mineral and/or oil/gas production. Prescribed fire or mechanical vegetation treatments may be used to improve stand production and forage and browse production.

- One or more commodity resource program areas (e.g., **livestock, timber harvest, minerals, oil and gas**) may be emphasized, while providing a wide array of recreational opportunities and diverse ecological conditions.
- These lands often display a high level of investment, use, activity, facility density, and vegetation manipulation. For example, fences, transportation systems, seeding, etc. Maintenance of past and current investments will be continued for future management opportunities.
- A mosaic of vegetation conditions is present, some showing the effects of past management activities, others appearing predominantly natural.
- Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities.
- Recreation opportunities vary from dispersed to developed.
- Facilities and infrastructure supporting the various resources are common.
- **Travel:** Motorized use is common due to a relatively high road density.

THEME 6 GRASSLANDS ENVIRONMENT

This theme does NOT occur on the San Juan National Forest/BLM Resource Area.

THEME 7 RESIDENTIAL FOREST INTERMIX

Public lands are intermingled with private lands to such an extent that management objectives for public lands are generally secondary to community or landowner uses and objectives. These areas, often referred to as the "wildland-urban interface," are priority for fuels and vegetation treatments to reduce wildfire hazard.

- Human activities have altered the natural appearance of these landscapes in most areas on both public and private lands. Sights and sounds of people predominate.
- Resource production (**logging, grazing, mining**, etc.) is not planned on a sustainable basis, but may occur in concert with surrounding community objectives.
- **Energy and mineral production, including oil and gas leasing**, is allowed but limited to protect the natural setting and public health/safety through controlled surface use, timing restrictions and/or No Surface Occupancy.
- **Vegetation management** may be done to minimize fuel-loading, reduce wildfire hazards and provide for public safety.
- **Travel:** Motorized transportation is common. Travel modes and access will vary depending on the area.
- Some dispersed recreation uses (e.g., over-night camping) are not encouraged.
- Access to existing areas of high recreational use is provided.
- Land exchanges and acquisitions can be used to improve ownership patterns, to the extent that land adjustments are compatible with community and other landowner objectives.
- Appropriate seasonal closures may occur to protect wildlife habitat.

THEME 8 PERMANENTLY DEVELOPED AREAS

These areas, which are generally small in scale, are permanently altered by human activities to the extent ecological conditions and landscape appearance are likely outside their natural range. Management emphasis is generally for a single program, such as ski areas or mineral development.

- Examples of permanently developed sites include: highly developed and concentrated recreation complexes such as **ski areas**, utility corridors, mining sites or districts, oil and gas fields, and administrative sites.
- Human activities are generally commercial in nature and directly or indirectly provide jobs and income.
- Ecological conditions are maintained to ensure public health and safety, and secondary aesthete and amenity values.
- **Travel:** Motorized transportation is common.
- Rangeland management using **livestock grazing** may occur to meet area objectives.