

# San Juan Plan Revision Management Themes Working DRAFT (03/15/06)

## 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. In general Theme 1 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- 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 SITUATION AREAS

These areas are typically small in size and possess one or more special features or characteristics that make them stand out from other areas of the San Juan Public Lands. Theme 2 areas are managed to protect or enhance unique characteristics. Management emphasizes protecting or improving, and where appropriate, developing and interpreting areas of special characteristics for public education and enjoyment. Theme 2 areas on the San Juan include Research Natural Areas (RNAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Wild Horse Herd Management Areas, Archeological Areas, Habitat Areas, Botanical Areas, and unique areas that have a mix of special features and uses. Intensity of management will vary based on the area objectives. Individual management prescriptions are written for Theme 2 areas that identify the special or unique features and how they will be managed. The following points generally apply to most Theme 2 areas; however management strategies and allowable activities and uses will differ for each Theme 2 area.

- 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.
- 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 compatible with the specific management prescription.

## 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, various management tools may be used to restore, maintain or protect 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. In general Theme 3 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- 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, improve habitat or to restore natural conditions. Structural improvements, vegetation manipulation and wildland fire use may be applied to maintain the character of an area or to maintain resource resiliency.
- **Livestock grazing and rangeland management**, though common, is managed to maintain the desired condition. Current rangeland improvements will be maintained, removed or redesigned to meet the character of a “Theme 3 natural landscape”.
- **Restoration of altered lands:** Theme 3 may be applied to landscapes that have been altered by past management activities. These lands often do not appear “natural in appearance” and may require active restoration management to restore the landscape and achieve the desired future condition of Theme 3 management direction and appearance.

## 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 will occur ranging from developed facilities to unstructured activities such as fishing, hiking, etc. In general Theme 4 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- Resource uses (such as: **livestock grazing, timber management, wildlife management**) may take place in conjunction with surrounding recreation/scenic objectives.
- **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 use 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 that are 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. In general Theme 5 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- 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.
- Restoration management may be actively applied.
- 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.
- Prescribed fire, mechanical vegetation treatments, and wildland fire may be used to reduce fuels, and improve habitat, stand production, forage and browse production.

## 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 often coordinated with consideration to adjacent land owners and community objectives. These areas, often referred to as the "wildland-urban interface," are priority areas for fuels and vegetation treatments to reduce wildfire hazard. Given the interface of land owners and the variety of resource activities there is a stronger presence and intensity of management to mitigate uses on these lands. In general Theme 7 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- Human activities have altered the natural appearance of these landscapes in many areas on both public and private lands. Sights and sounds of people predominate.
- Resource production (**logging, grazing, mining, etc.**) may occur in concert with surrounding community objectives.
- **Energy and mineral production, including oil and gas leasing**, is allowed but may be limited to protect the natural setting and public health/safety through controlled surface use, timing restrictions and/or No Surface Occupancy.
- **Vegetation management** to meet desired future conditions may include, but is not limited to minimizing fuel loads and reducing wildfire hazards 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. Additionally, partnerships to enhance recreation opportunities and access with surrounding land owners is emphasized.
- Utility and communication distribution lines are more common in these areas.
- Land exchanges, acquisitions, and disposals can be used to improve ownership patterns, to the extent that land adjustments are compatible with public land objectives.
- Appropriate seasonal closures may occur to protect wildlife habitat and manage wildlife and human interactions.
- Negotiations and agreements to mitigate use and maintenance of FS and BLM roads that are used for residential and county access are more frequent in these areas.
- Cooperative agreements for noxious weed management are common in these areas.

## 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. In general Theme 8 may include, but is not limited to the following descriptors:

- 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 aesthetic and amenity values.
- **Travel:** Motorized transportation is common.
- Rangeland management using **livestock grazing** may occur to meet area objectives.
- Hazardous fuels reduction projects may be implemented to mitigate impacts to developed infrastructure.