

WILD AND SCENIC ELIGIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR FISH AND FISH HABITAT
San Juan Forest and BLM

DRAFT 5/3/06

I. Region of comparison:

“The interdisciplinary team must identify the area of consideration that will serve as the basis for meaningful comparative analysis. This area of consideration is not fixed; it may be a national forest, grassland, prairie, or comparable administrative unit, a portion of a state, or an appropriately scaled physiographic or hydrologic unit. Once the area of consideration is identified, a river’s values can then be analyzed in comparison with other rivers.” (FSH 1909.12-80)

For this resource, we used the following area of consideration.

- SW Colorado
- Southern Rocky Mountains Province
- Colorado Plateau Province
- other (explain)

II. Analysis procedure

(describe analysis procedure here, including data available, references consulted, etc.)

“There are a variety of methods to determine that certain river-related values are so unique, rare, or exemplary as to make them outstandingly remarkable. The determination that a river area contains outstanding values is a professional judgment on the part of an interdisciplinary team, based on objective, scientific analysis.” (FSH 1909.12-80)

In order to be assessed as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale. A river-related value would be a conspicuous example of that value from among a number of similar examples that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary. (FSH 1909.12-80)

The following eligibility criteria are offered to foster greater consistency within the agency and with other federal river-administering agencies. They are intended to set minimum thresholds to establish outstandingly remarkable values and are illustrative and not all-inclusive. These criteria may be modified to make them more meaningful in the area of comparison, and additional criteria may be included.

Fish. Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions. (FSH 1909.12-80)

a. *Populations.* The river is nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

b. *Habitat.* The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable. (FSH1909.12-80)

Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and the Roundtailed Chub are species of special concern because they are sensitive native species and qualify as “wild stocks and/or federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, or sensitive species”. They are on the Forest Service sensitive species list, and are considered by Colorado Division of Wildlife as species of special concern.

When selecting streams that would be part of the Wild and Scenic analysis, we added the several streams occupied by the purest genetic strains of Colorado River Cutthroat. Some of these were smaller than the 3rd order criteria used to determine the rest of the stream network in the analysis.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values for fish included occupied Colorado River Cutthroat streams, occupied Round tail chub habitat, and the network of streams in the Hermosa River drainage that would allow reintroduction of cutthroat and the development of a meta-population in the watershed.

The Hermosa watershed is unique for cutthroat reintroduction in that the limestone outcropping that bisects many of the tributaries on both the east and west sides of Hermosa Creek provides a barrier to upstream migration of other fish species. Also, the proximity of the numerous tributaries would allow a vibrant and stable population of cutthroat in the mainstem that could draw from each of the tributaries. Such a meta-population is much more resilient, and can survive damaging events in any one tributary, without threatening the whole population.

Potential cutthroat reintroduction sites throughout the study area were obtained from Division of Wildlife. Sites other than the Hermosa watershed were noted as values, but were not considered sufficiently unique or rare to qualify as Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

Cutthroat streams in the Navajo River were not considered eligible because they are on private land.

III. Justification for each ORV

Dolores Below McPhee: Roundtail chub (possibly Flannel Mouth sucker lower down)

Rio Lado: This stream is occupied by Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. The Forest Service has invested funds in stream improvements to protect this population. Therefore it qualifies as an ORV because of the presence of *wild stocks* and *provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison*.

Taylor Creek: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

East Fork Piedra: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

West Virginia Gulch: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

Augustora creek: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

Beaver Creek (trib to W. Fork San Juan) : This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

Himes Creek: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and thus have an ORV for fishery because they are important producers of resident fish species and are of particular significance because of the presence of wild stocks

Big Bend Creek: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. In addition, it is part of the Hermosa Creek watershed, and has potential for meta-population reintroduction.

Clear Creek: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. In addition, it is part of the Hermosa Creek watershed, and has potential for meta-population reintroduction

East Fork Hermosa: This stream is one of 12 sites within the Forest that contain genetically pure strains of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. In addition, it is part of the Hermosa Creek watershed, and has potential for meta-population reintroduction

Big Lick Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

Corral Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

Deer Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

Elk Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

Hermosa Creek mainstem, and Grassy Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

South Fork Hermosa Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)

West Cross Creek: This stream has habitat suitable for cutthroat reintroduction as part of the Hermosa Creek meta-population (see description in analysis procedure, above)