San Juan Plan Revision
RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS
Prepared for Public Meetings—May 2006

Research natural areas (RNAs) are designated in perpetuity for nonmanipulative research and education, and to maintain biological diversity on National Forest System Lands.

The objectives of establishing Research Natural Areas (FSM 4063.02) are to:

1. Maintain a wide spectrum of high quality areas that represent the major forms of ecological diversity on National Forest lands 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.
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.

Nine potential RNAs were selected and incorporated into Forest Plan Revision alternatives. They are listed in the table below, along with the two existing RNAs. These particular RNAs were selected because they collectively represent most of the major vegetation types on the SJNF, they represent many of the vegetation types within the Rocky Mountain Region targeted for inclusion in the Regional RNA system, they provide excellent research possibilities, they preserve and maintain multiple biological diversity components, and because they include excellent reference areas for monitoring and adaptive management.

	RNA	Acres	Elevation (feet)	Key Features
A	Narraguinnep*	1900	6690 to 8000	old growth ponderosa pine forests, pinyon-juniper woodlands, mountain shrublands, canyon topography
B	Williams Creek*	550	8350 to 9650	white fir-dominated cool-moist mixed conifer forests, spruce-fir forests
E	Electra	2200	7400 to 8841	glacial topography, kettle ponds, old growth ponderosa pine forests, mixed conifer forests
G	Grizzly Peak	5000	10,140 to 13,752	periglacial topography, alpine, fens, old growth spruce-fir forests, willow carrs, wetlands, Thurber fescue grasslands
F	Hermosa	8000	6800 to 13,000	ponderosa pine forests, mixed-conifer forests, aspen forests, spruce-fir forests, wetlands, Thurber fescue grasslands
D	Hidden Mesas	4400	6600 to 8320	old growth ponderosa pine forests, pinyon-juniper woodlands, mountain shrublands, no historic livestock grazing
C	Martinez Creek	1800	9400 to 11,460	old growth spruce-fir forests
K	Navajo River	7000	9200 to 12,727	alpine, Thurber fescue grasslands, volcanic geology, Colorado cutthroat trout, riparian areas, wetlands
H	Needle Mountains	10,000	8400 to 14,000	alpine, riparian, wetlands, mixed-conifer forests, spruce-fir forests, aspen forests, granite & quartzite geology, high diversity
I	Piedra	6900	7560 to 10,471	old growth warm-dry mixed-conifer and cool-moist mixed-conifer forests, spruce-fir forests, riparian areas
J	Porphyry Gulch	12,000	8560 to 12,593	alpine, spruce-fir forests, wetlands, canyons

*Existing RNA