WILD AND SCENID ELIGIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR WILDLIFE
San Juan Forest and BLM

DRAFT 5/3/06

Justification for Each ORV:

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.

__X__SW Colorado.
___Southern Rocky Mountains Province.
___Colorado Plateau Province.
_X_Other (explain). *World-wide*

The black swift world-wide breeding distribution is limited to a narrow portion of the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to British Columbia, and a narrow band along sea cliffs overlooking the Pacific coast from California to Alaska. The San Juan planning area provides a significant contribution to the species' world-wide breeding distribution by providing a core breeding population and by providing critical connectivity within the southern Rocky Mountains portion of its range.

Canyon Tree Frogs were evaluated for Colorado, where they are rare.

II. Analysis Procedure:

"*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. (FSH 1909.12-80)

"Wildlife. Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either terrestrial or aquatic wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these conditions.

a. Populations. The river, or area within the river corridor, contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique, and/or populations of 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, or area within the river corridor, provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and/or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met. Diversity of habitat is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable" . (FSH1909.12-80)

Terrestrial wildlife populations were analyzed to determine which were both river-related and outstandingly remarkable, in order to make a stream segment eligible for Wild and Scenic based on wildlife values.

Southwestern willow flycatcher habitat is often found in association with river corridors that are being analyzed for Wild and Scenic designation, but are also located well away from these corridors. Because habitat for this species is not necessarily associated with river corridors we did not consider this value to meet the Wild and Scenic definition for outstandingly remarkable and river-related.

River otter, desert bighorn sheep and bald eagle habitat often occurs in association with river corridors being analyzed, but these species are not dependant on or limited by any unique values found in stretches of rivers being analyzed. For this reason we did not consider these species as meeting the Wild and Scenic definition for "outstandingly remarkable" ORVs.

Occupied nesting sites of Black swifts was the main terrestrial wildlife value identified that make a river eligible for Wild and Scenic status. The streams listed below are where there are Black Swift nesting sites along streams identified for study. There are additional Black Swift nest sites on smaller streams that were not evaluated in this Wild and Scenic River analysis.

Canyon Tree Frogs are rare in Colorado, **although globally secure,** and are listed as a species of concern in the state. According to the CNHP inventory, they are found in Bull Canyon, Spring Canyon, and Summit Canyon.

a. Populations.

Black swift has a relatively long life expectancy (about 12 years), relatively low abundance and low reproductive rate (maximum of 1 young per pair per year) compared to most other birds of similar size, making this species potentially highly vulnerable to even small changes in habitat availability and/or reproductive output. They are highly site-faithful with adults returning to the same waterfall and nest cup year after year. Only about 110 occupied swift nest sites have been found statewide in Colorado, and this may represent up to 20% of the world's nesting population.

The San Juan Mountains may contain up to one-third of the state's potential nest sites. The San Juan planning area contains about 20 occupied swift breeding sites, representing about 17% of the statewide breeding population, and represents a core area in the species' distribution in the Southern Rocky Mountains. Maintaining this segment of its population is important to maintaining species connectivity and distribution within its continental range.

b. Habitat.

The combination of water quantity and quality as it flows over cliff faces is the primary limiting factor for black swift nesting habitat. Swift nesting habitat is limited to water courses with perennial instream flow over falls of sufficient stature to provide prominence over local terrain, and that have water of sufficient quality to provide abundant moss growing on the waterfall cliff face for use as the sole nest building material. This combination of required habitat components is clearly rare and not regularly distributed across the species world-wide nesting range.

Black swifts have highly specific habitat requirements and most waterfalls that appear to be suitable for nesting remain vacant for unknown reasons. For this reason we only selected known occupied sites to be candidates for outstandingly remarkable value designation.

III. Justification for Each ORV:

A total of 21 waterfalls occupied by nesting black swifts occur within river segments that are being analyzed for Wild and Scenic designation. These

sites represent populations of a unique wildlife species that has regional and national significance. These sites each contain a unique combination of the narrow habitat conditions required for occupancy by this species.

- West Dolores River has 1 occupied waterfall.
- East Fork Piedra River has 1 occupied waterfall.
- Animas River, Deer Park to Animas Forks, has 4 occupied waterfalls.
- Maggie Gulch has 1 occupied waterfall.
- South Fork Mineral Creek and the waterfalls on its valley side walls contains a unique cluster of 4 closely adjacent occupied waterfalls, representing a small core area in the species Colorado breeding distribution.
- East Fork San Juan River and the waterfall on its valley side wall (Silver Falls) contains one of the largest black swift breeding colonies in southwestern Colorado.
- Quartz Creek contains 1 occupied waterfall.
- Fourmile Creek in the wilderness contains 2 occupied waterfalls.
- Turkey Creek in the wilderness contains 2 occupied waterfalls.
- West Fork San Juan River contains 2 occupied waterfalls.
- Wolf Creek and Fall Creek contain 2 occupied waterfalls.

Canyon Tree Frogs are rare in Colorado, and are listed as a species of concern in the state. They are found in Bull Canyon Summit Canyon, and Spring Canyon, tributaries to the lower Dolores in the Wilderness Study Area.

- Bull Canyon
- Spring Canyon
- Summit Canyon