Chapter III

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Chapter III

Forestwide Standards and Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Forest Plan management direction at its broadest level applies to National Forests and Grasslands, and for simplicity is called Forestwide direction. It consists of Desired Conditions expressed as Goals, and management requirements written as Standards and Guidelines. Objectives set measurable time or quantity constraints within which Goals are achieved.

Goals represent the Desired Condition. Desired conditions have a timeless nature and represent the Forest's ultimate intent. Achievement of goals is not mandatory, and no time frame for accomplishment is established. Where the current conditions are different from Goals, strategies are developed to make progress toward the Desired Conditions expressed in the Goals.

Standards are courses of action or levels of attainment required to achieve the Desired Conditions. Standards are mandatory; deviation from Standards is not permissible without an amendment to the Forest Plan. Standards are developed (1) when laws or policies do not exist, or benefit from further clarification; (2) when Standards are critical to Objectives; and (3) when unacceptable impacts would be expected if a Standard were not in place.

Guidelines are defined as preferred or advisable courses of action or levels of attainment designed to achieve the Desired Conditions. When deviation from a Guideline is necessary, it will be documented during the project-level analysis. Under those circumstances, the responsible official should recognize the purpose(s) for which the Guideline was developed and assure interested individuals that any subsequently approved actions are not in conflict with the purposes for which the Guideline was developed. Guidelines are developed in the following circumstances: (1) when they contribute to achievement of Goals; (2) in response to variable site conditions; (3) in response to variable overall conditions; and (4) when professional expertise is needed.

Where Standards and Guidelines deviate among the two levels of direction (Forestwide and Management Area), those that are more restrictive or stringent apply. (Additional direction is in Appendix B--Key National and Regional Policies). If changes are made in the Forest Service directives system that conflict with the Standards and Guidelines of this Forest Plan, the Forest Plan will be amended.

Objectives identify quantities of items within the planning time frame**.** Objectives concisely describe specific, measurable results or conditions desired, and are action-oriented. They closely reflect Regional Objectives in the *Rocky Mountain Regional Guide*, 1992.

Goals, Standards, and Guidelines are grouped according to the outline in the Table of Contents. Direction for managing the ecosystem in an integrated fashion often cannot be categorized to fit under one heading; direction pertaining to one subject may also be covered under others.

The following Standards and Guidelines package is designed to be specific to the Rio Grande National Forest. Laws, regulations, and Forest Service direction are generally not repeated in this package. Some resource areas, such as Heritage resources and Fire, have very specific direction in law, regulation, policy, or the Forest Service directive system. On many Forests, this direction is adequate for management of the resource at the Forest level. For such resources, Forestwide Standards and Guidelines are unnecessary.

If the reader does not see a particular resource addressed in this package of Forestwide Standards and Guidelines, that does not mean the resource is not managed, nor does it mean the Forest Service considers a particular resource less important than those listed. The entire Forest Plan, including the appendices, must be carefully read to understand how all resources will be managed. Refer to the Forestwide Desired Condition and Goal statements, Forestwide Objectives, and the appendices for complete information. In particular, Appendix B contains references or repeats key direction for resource management found outside the Forest Plan.

Since biodiversity covers a broad array of topics, the reader must consider all the Forestwide and Management-Area Prescription Standards and Guidelines that follow for a complete treatment of this revision topic.

SECTION 1 - PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Air Resources

STANDARD

1. Conduct all land management activities in such a manner as to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local air quality standards and regulations, including:

   a. Federal:
   The Clean Air Act, as amended, 1991, (P.L. 95-95)

   b. State of Colorado:
   The Colorado Air Quality Control Act, Colorado Statutes 25-7-101 through 25-7-505

Mineral and Energy Resources - General

STANDARD

1. Reclamation will be considered satisfactory when the disturbed area has been reclaimed in accordance with operating plan requirements, and desired vegetative conditions have been achieved.

Mineral and Energy Resources - Leasable Minerals

GUIDELINE

1. The following resource stipulations (NSO-No Surface Occupancy and CSU-Controlled Surface Use) will apply to all administratively available and authorized lands, unless a more restrictive stipulation is required by the Management-Area Prescription:

*	Slopes of 40%or more	NSO
*	High Mass-Movement Potential	NSO
*	Alpine Ecosystems	NSO
*	Watersheds of High Concern	NSO
*	Moderate Mass-Movement Potential	CSU

Mineral and Energy Resources - Locatable Minerals

STANDARDS

1. "Rockhounding" (hunting and collecting rocks and minerals) on National Forest System lands, except in designated Wilderness, will be allowed without a permit, providing the activity does not interfere with existing rights, and that specimens are used for personal, noncommercial uses.

2. Recreational panning, sluicing, and dredging shall be allowed outside Wilderness where such activities do not interfere with the rights of mining claimants protected under the *1872 Mining Law*, as amended. These activities shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, to determine if an operating plan is needed, by the authorized Forest Service official.

Mineral and Energy Resources - Reserved and Outstanding Rights

STANDARD

1. Surface management for private oil and gas minerals will be negotiated with the owner and operator to be as close as possible to the standards used for federal minerals; prohibiting such development is not an alternative.

SECTION 2 - WATERSHED

Soil, Water, and Aquatic Resources - including Fish and Riparian/Wetlands

Hydrologic Function

STANDARD

1. Manage land treatments to conserve site moisture and protect long-term stream health from damage by increased runoff.

GUIDELINES

1. In each 3rd-order and larger watershed, limit connected disturbed areas so the total stream network is not expanded by more than 10%. Progress toward zero connected disturbed area, as much as feasible. Do not add connected disturbed area to Class III watersheds (FSM 2521).

2. Design the size, orientation, and surface roughness of forest openings to prevent snow scour and site desiccation.

STANDARD

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff.

GUIDELINES

1. Maintain the organic ground cover of each land unit so that pedestals, rills, and surface runoff from the land unit are not increased.

2. Restore the organic ground cover of degraded land units within the next Plan period, using native vegetation as feasible.

Riparian Areas

STANDARD

1. In the water influence zone (WIZ) next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those land treatments that maintain or improve long-term stream health.

GUIDELINES

1. Allow no land treatments that will cause long-term change to a lower-stream-health class in any stream reach. In degraded systems, progress toward robust stream health within the next Plan period.

2. Keep heavy equipment out of streams, swales, and lakes, except to cross at designated points, build crossings, or do restoration work; or if protected by at least 1 foot of packed snow or 2 inches of frozen soil. Keep heavy equipment out of streams during fish spawning, incubation, and emergence periods.

3. Ensure at least one-end log suspension in the WIZ. Fell trees in a way that protects vegetation in the WIZ from damage. Keep log landings and skid trails out of the WIZ.

4. Situate new concentrated-use sites outside the WIZ if feasible, and outside riparian areas always. Harden or reclaim existing sites in the WIZ to prevent detrimental soil and bank erosion.

5. Keep stock tanks, salt supplements, and similar features out of the WIZ if feasible and out of riparian areas always. Keep stock driveways out of the WIZ except to cross at designated points. Harden water gaps and designated stock crossings where needed and feasible.

6. Remove livestock from riparian areas when average stubble heights on key species reach 4 inches in early-use pastures and 6 inches or more in late-use pastures.

7. Avoid season-long grazing in riparian areas. Apply short-duration spring grazing, as feasible, to help regrowth and reduce utilization of willows. Control grazing-period length in spring-use riparian pastures to minimize utilization of regrowth; this is normally 20-30 days.

8. Limit utilization of riparian woody plants to 15-20% of current annual growth, and of herbaceous plants to 40-45% of annual production.

9. Maintain the extent of stable banks in each stream reach at 80% or more of reference conditions. Limit cumulative stream bank alteration (soil trampled or exposed) at any time to 20-25% of any stream reach.

10. Do not excavate borrow material from, or store excavated borrow material in, any stream, swale, lake, wetland, or WIZ.

STANDARD

2. Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to pass normal flows, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life.

GUIDELINES

1. Install stream crossings to meet Corps of Engineers and State permits, pass normal flows, and be hardened to withstand floods as follows:

Design Life (years):	1	2	5	10	20	50
Design Flood (years):	10	10	25	50	100	225

2. Size culverts and bridges to pass debris. Install trash racks upstream if needed. Engineers should work with hydrologists on site design.

3. Install stream crossings on straight and resilient stream reaches, as perpendicular to flow as feasible, to provide passage of fish and other aquatic life.

4. Install stream crossings in this order of preference, as feasible, to keep stream beds and banks intact: bridge, hardened ford, bottomless arch, culvert.

STANDARD

3. Conduct actions so that stream pattern, geometry, and habitats are maintained or improved toward robust stream health.

GUIDELINES

1. Add or remove rocks, wood, or other material in streams or lakes only to maintain or improve their health. Leave rocks and portions of wood that are embedded in beds or banks, to prevent channel scour.

2. Install fish migration barriers only if needed to protect Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or unique native aquatic populations, and only where natural barriers do not exist.

3. Do not relocate natural stream channels, if avoidable. Return flow to natural channels, where feasible. Construct channels

and floodways with natural stream pattern and geometry, and stable beds and banks.

STANDARD

4. Do not degrade ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, or flow patterns in wetlands.

GUIDELINES

1. Keep ground vehicles out of wetlands unless protected by at least 1 foot of packed snow or 2 inches of frozen soil. Do not disrupt drainage patterns into wetlands with roads, trails, or ditches.

2. Keep roads and trails out of wetlands if feasible; use bridges or raised prisms with diffuse drainage in wetlands. Set crossing bottoms at natural levels of channel beds and wet meadow surfaces.

3. Do not build firelines in or around wetlands, unless needed to protect life, property, or wetlands. Use hand lines with minimum feasible soil disturbance. Use wetland features as firelines, if feasible.

STANDARD

5. Maintain enough water in perennial streams to sustain existing stream health. Return some water to dewatered perennial streams when needed and feasible.

GUIDELINES

1. For **existing** dams and diversions on naturally perennial streams, obtain bypass flows at the point of diversion or storage that sustain a community of aquatic life having all regionally-expected species with all age and sex groups at permit reissuance. Native median February flow from October to March, and native median August flow from April to September, are base flows that have been shown to sustain aquatic life.

   NOTE: These base flows are minimum, not target, flows. Lands staff must verify authorities over each water use. Bypass flows and instream-flow water rights are distinctly different, but settlement of reserved water rights claims can meet this criterion if the negotiated flows are decreed to the United States by a court of jurisdiction.

2. For **new** dams and diversions, obtain bypass flows at the point of diversion or storage that protect stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats, and recreation and aesthetic uses, where such values are important. Include base flows, and a range of high flows that bracket bankfull discharge, as needed to support these uses.

NOTE: Both base and high flows are needed to sustain stream health.

3. Obtain instream-flow water rights under Federal and State law to protect stream processes, aquatic and riparian habitats, and recreation and aesthetic uses on streams where such values are important. Top priority is to protect native, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive species.

STANDARD

6. Manage water-use facilities to prevent gully erosion of slopes and to prevent sediment and bank damage to streams.

GUIDELINES

1. Design all ditches, canals, and pipes with at least an 80% chance of passing high flows and remaining stable during their life.
2. Do not flush or deposit sediment from behind diversion structures into the stream below. Deposit sediment in a designated upland site.
3. Mitigate water imports so that the extent of stable banks in each receiving stream reach is at least 80% of reference conditions.

Sediment Control

STANDARD

1. Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operations, local topography, and climate.

GUIDELINES

1. Construct roads on ridge tops, stable upper slopes, or wide valley terraces if feasible. Stabilize soils on-site. End-haul soil if full-bench construction is used. Avoid slopes steeper than 70%.
2. Avoid soil-disturbing actions during periods of heavy rain or wet soils. Apply travel restrictions to protect soil and water.
3. Install cross drains to disperse runoff into filter strips and minimize connected disturbed areas. Harden cuts, fills, and surfaces between stream crossings and the top of the vertical curve on both sides.
4. Where feasible, construct roads with rolling grades instead of ditches and culverts.
5. Retain stabilizing vegetation on unstable soils. Avoid new roads or heavy-equipment use on unstable or highly erodible soils.
6. Use existing roads unless other options will produce less long-term sediment. Reconstruct for long-term soil and drainage stability.

7. Avoid ground skidding with blades lowered or on highly erodible slopes steeper than 40%. Conduct logging to disperse runoff, as feasible.

8. Designate, construct, and maintain OHV travelways for proper drainage. Harden all OHV stream crossings.

STANDARD

2. Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands.

GUIDELINES

1. Design all roads, trails, and other soil disturbances to the minimum standard for their use and to "roll" with the terrain as feasible.

2. Use filter strips, and sediment traps if needed, to keep all sand-sized sediment on the land and disconnect disturbed soil from streams, lakes, and wetlands. Disperse runoff into filter strips.

3. Key sediment traps into the ground. Clean them out when 80% full. Remove sediment to a stable, gentle upland site and revegetate.

4. Keep heavy equipment out of filter strips, except to do restoration work or build hardened stream or lake approaches. Yard logs up out of each filter strip with minimum disturbance of ground cover.

5. Build firelines outside filter strips, unless tied into a stream, lake, or wetland as a firebreak with minimal disturbed soil. Retain organic ground cover in filter strips during prescribed fires.

6. Design road ditches and cross drains to limit flow to ditch capacity and prevent ditch erosion and failure.

STANDARD

3. Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction, to control erosion.

GUIDELINES

1. Do not encroach fills, or deposit or sidecast soil, into streams, swales, lakes, or wetlands.

2. Properly compact fills and keep woody debris out of them. Revegetate cuts and fills upon final shaping, to restore ground cover. Control sediment until erosion control is permanent.

3. Do not disturb ditches during maintenance, unless needed to restore drainage capacity or repair damage. Do not undercut the cut slope.

4. Space cross drains, from no more than 120 feet in highly erodible soils on steep grades, to no more than 1,000 feet in resistant soils on flat grades. Do not divert water from one stream to another.

5. Empty cross drains onto stable slopes that disperse runoff into filter strips. On soils that may gully, armor outlets to disperse runoff. Tighten cross-drain spacing so gullies are not created.

6. Harden rolling dips as needed to prevent rutting damage. Ensure that road maintenance creates stable surfaces and drainage.

7. Remove or breach berms that would concentrate runoff, without disturbing the original road surface and drainage features.

8. Build firelines with rolling grades and minimum downhill convergence. Outslope or backblade, permanently drain, and revegetate firelines immediately after the burn.

STANDARD

4. Reclaim roads and other disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage.

GUIDELINES

1. Site-prepare, drain, revegetate, and close temporary and intermittent-use roads and other disturbed sites within one year after use ends. Use natural drainage that disperses runoff into filter strips and maintains stable fills. Do this work concurrently. Use native vegetation as feasible.

2. Remove all temporary stream crossings (including all fill material in the active channel), restore the channel geometry, and revegetate the channel banks, using native vegetation as feasible.

Soil Productivity

STANDARD

1. Manage land treatments to limit the sum of severely burned and detrimentally compacted, eroded, and displaced land to no more than 15% of any land unit (FSH 2509.18).

GUIDELINES

1. Restrict roads, landings, skid trails, developed recreation, livestock-gathering areas, and similar soil disturbances to designated sites.

2. Operate heavy equipment for land treatments only when soil moisture is below the plastic limit, or protected by at least 1 foot of packed snow or 2 inches of frozen soil.

3. Conduct prescribed fires when soil, humus, and large fuels are moist.

STANDARD

2. Maintain or improve long-term levels of organic matter and nutrients on all lands.

GUIDELINES

1. On soils with topsoil thinner than 1 inch, topsoil organic matter less than 2%, or effective rooting depth less than 15

inches, retain 90% or more of the fine (less than 3 inches in diameter) logging slash in the stand after each clearcut and seed-tree harvest, and retain 50% or more of such slash in the stand after each shelterwood and group-selection harvest, considering existing and projected levels of fine slash.

2. If machine piling of slash is done, conduct piling to leave topsoil in place and to avoid displacing soil into piles or windrows.

Water Purity

STANDARD

1. Place new sources of chemical and pathogenic pollutants where such pollutants will not reach surface or ground water.

GUIDELINES

1. Put pack and riding stock sites, sanitary sites, and well drill-pads outside the water influence zone (WIZ).
2. Put vehicle service and fuel areas, chemical storage and use areas, and waste dumps and areas on gentle upland sites. Perform mixing, loading, and cleaning on gentle upland sites. Dispose of chemicals and containers in state-certified disposal areas.

STANDARD

2. Apply runoff controls to disconnect new pollutant sources from surface and ground water.

GUIDELINES

1. Install contour berms and trenches around vehicle service and refueling areas, chemical storage and use areas, and waste dumps, to fully contain spills. Use liners as needed to prevent seepage to ground water.

2. Reclaim each mine-waste dump when its use ends. Stabilize waste dumps and tailings in non-use periods, to prevent wind and water erosion. If non-use will exceed one year, perform concurrent reclamation.

3. Use lined ponds below waste dumps and tailings to contain all inflow. Build tailings dams with a 95% chance of containing floods over their design life. Permanently stabilize dams at final shaping.

4. Clean waste water from concrete batching and aggregate operations before returning the water to streams, lakes, or wetlands.

5. Inspect chemical equipment daily for leaks. If leaks or spills occur, report them and install emergency traps to contain them and clean them up.

STANDARD	3.	Apply chemicals using methods which minimize risk of entry to surface and ground water.
GUIDELINES	1.	Favor pesticides with half-lives of three months or less. Apply at lowest effective rates as large droplets or pellets. Follow the label. Favor selective treatment. Use only aquatic-labeled chemicals in the WIZ.
	2.	Use non-toxic, non-hazardous drilling fluids.

SECTION 3 - BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Biodiversity

STANDARDS

1. Prescriptions will be developed prior to timber harvest to identify the distribution of coarse woody debris and snags to be left on-site, as well as live green replacement trees for future snags. Table III-1 displays the minimum requirements for adequate wildlife habitat and ecosystem function. The amounts are to be calculated as a per-acre average over a project area.

   Snags are important for cavity-nesting birds and other wildlife. Coarse woody debris (CWD: woody materials greater than three inches diameter) is important for retaining moisture, trapping soil movement, providing microsites for plant establishment, and cycling soil nutrients in ecosystems. A wide variety of CWD size classes is preferred.

   On forested sites, snags and CWD should be retained (when materials are available) in accordance with the average minimums in Table III-1 below. Retain the largest-diameter snags possible.

Table III - 1. Coarse Woody Debris Retention Requirements.

FOREST TYPE	SNAGS			DOWNED LOGS
	Minimum Diameter (inches)	Minimum Height (feet)	Retention Density (number per acre)	Retention Density (tons/acre)
Spruce/Fir	12	25	2	10-15
Lodgepole Pine	10	25	2	5-10
Aspen	12	25	2	3-5
Douglas-Fir	12	25	2	5-10
Ponderosa Pine	14	25	2	4-9

All soft snags should be retained unless they are a safety hazard. If minimum-diameter snags cannot be found, use the largest available snags.

2. Local populations of native plant species (at the subsection level) will be used for revegetation efforts where technically and economically feasible. Seed mixtures should be weed free. To prevent soil erosion, nonnative annuals or sterile perennial species may be used while native perennials are becoming established.

3. On suitable lands, an inventory/reconnaissance will be conducted early in the timber sale planning process to determine if old growth is present, and make assessments of quality and distribution. The inventory/reconnaissance will be conducted for the landscape/watershed being proposed for harvest using Mehl's (1992) description as the basis for identifying old growth.

   On the remaining portions of the Forest, general information on the presence of old growth (using Mehl's description) will be collected using various techniques, such as review of plot data or walk-throughs during routine work by Forest personnel. This information will be collected over the life of the Plan to provide better information for future planning.

GUIDELINES

1. Some old-growth/late-successional forest stands may be preserved or deferred from harvesting to maintain biotic diversity within the landscape/watershed. Size, distribution, abundance, and degree of habitat variation between old-growth stands will be assessed. The following will be considered in selecting old-growth stands that may be retained:

   * Older stands that have not been manipulated are more desirable than younger ones.

   * Stands with limited uses and access by humans are better to maintain old-growth characteristics.

   * Stands that are habitat for species listed as TES or Colorado Natural Heritage Program Species of Special Concern.

   * Stands exhibiting a greater variety of attributes , such as diverse canopy layers, decadence in live trees, standing and/or downed dead, patchiness, etc. (see Mehl 1992).

2. Aspen will be maintained in the environment. Analyze aspen's spatial and structural occurrence in the landscape during project design. Use landscape spatial analysis in aspen

project design to assist in selecting which existing and future old-growth stands are retained, maintaining habitat composition and structure, and providing habitat connectivity.

Spatial analysis allows a project area to be compared with reference areas, and considers a variety of attributes (e.g., composition, structure, patch-size distribution, etc.). The intent is to use the reference areas as baseline information to guide project design. The project interdisciplinary team will suggest how quickly or closely to approximate the reference areas. The analysis and resulting decision will document the rationale for choosing to deviate from reference conditions. For those timber sales in the Englemann Spruce on Mountain Slopes Landtype Association (LTA 1), a landscape spatial-analysis approach is described in Erhard et al. (1996). To keep within the parameters of the approach, the Analysis Area should contain at least 15,000 acres or more of LTA 1. It is recommended that the area boundaries follow watersheds and remain fixed for the duration of the Plan. For those projects in the other forested LTAs, the reference conditions will have to be inferred from the literature, experts, and local knowledge. Comparisons should be made within the same ecological LTA.

3. If aspen regeneration is considered, prioritize treatment within seral aspen clones using the following criteria:

   * Identify stands with large standing and down dead basal area (20% dead) that are single-storied and showing signs of animal barking (gnawing and bark stripping) or disease. Stands which are multi-storied, have several hundred sapling-size suckers per acre under them, or show little sign of canker diseases or animal barking would be a lower priority for any management intervention.

   * Identify conifer stands that contain a small minority of live aspen basal area (less than 10% live basal area). (Aspen is likely to disappear from these stands within several decades without intervention.)

   * Identify isolated clones and stands in heavy-animal-use areas and riparian areas, and those at low elevations. Any stands in these situations that meet the criteria above should be given the highest priority for regeneration. (These stands will be at greatest risk of disappearing and will be the toughest to regenerate successfully. Protection

of treatment areas from browsing animals may be needed to achieve successful regeneration.)

* Identify stands that are more cost efficient to treat and contribute positively to aspen's distribution.

Range

STANDARDS

1. Remove livestock from the grazing unit or allotment when further utilization on key areas will exceed allowable-use criteria in the Forest Plan or allotment management plan.

2. Phase out grazing systems that allow for livestock use in an individual unit during the entire vegetative-growth period, except where determined to achieve or maintain the desired plant community.

GUIDELINES

1. Develop site-specific vegetation utilization and residue guidelines during rangeland planning, and document them in allotment management plans. In the absence of updated planning or an approved allotment management plan, the utilization and residue guidelines in Tables III-2 and III-3 will apply.

Table III - 2. Forage Utilization Guidelines.

RANGELAND CONDITION*		
Type of Management	**Satisfactory**	**Unsatisfactory**
Season-long	35%	20%
Fall and Winter	55%	35%
Deferred Rotation	45%	25%
Rest Rotation	50%	35%

* Rangeland Condition - The RGNF does not have an ecological classification for rangeland vegetation on the Forest. The inventory process must concentrate on existing vegetation. Specifically, the inventory process will involve delineation of existing plant communities according to Integrated Resource Inventory (IRI) procedures, and comparison of the existing community to a desired plant community. The degree of similarity between existing and desired plant communities gives an estimate of vegetation management status. Those communities within 65% of desired-plant-community similarity are in satisfactory condition. Those not meeting 65% similarity are in unsatisfactory condition. (See *Rangeland Analysis and Management Guide,* 1996)

Table III - 3. Residue Allowances.

CLARY AND WEBSTER RESIDUE ALLOWANCES		
Season of Pasture Use	**Satisfactory**	**Unsatisfactory**
Spring	3 inches	4 inches
Summer and Fall	4 inches	6 inches

2. Livestock use of water-influence zones will be allowed as long as use is in compliance with residual stubble heights identified by the Intermountain Research Station General Technical Report INT-263, Managing Grazing of Riparian Areas in the Intermountain Region, 1996, by Warren Clary and Bert Webster, or more recent research.

Silviculture

STANDARDS

1. Forty acres is the maximum allowable acreage opening for the forest types. Exceptions to this maximum are stipulated in 36 CFR 219.27(d)(2)(I) through (III). The regulations at 36 CFR 219.27(d)(2)(ii) allow for size limits exceeding those established at 36 CFR 219.27(d)(2) and 36 CFR 219.27(d)(2)(I). Exceptions are permitted on an individual timber sale basis after 60 days' public notice, and review by the Regional Forester. The regulations at 36 CFR 219.27(d)(2)(III) provide that the established limit shall not apply to the size of areas harvested as a result of natural catastrophic conditions such as fire, insect and disease attack, or windstorm.

2. The scientifically defined silviculture systems shown by forest cover type in Table III-4, which meet the Management Objectives for the landscape or individual stands of trees within a landscape setting, are acceptable. Both even-aged and uneven-aged management systems can be used and applied at scales ranging from a few acres to many hundreds of acres. These silvicultural systems are to be applied in a manner that will ensure natural regeneration where artificial regeneration is not necessary for other resource objectives. Tree-stand vegetation management treatments are to be approved by certified silviculturists. The silvicultural systems identified in Table III-4 can be used to convert uneven-aged stands to even-aged management and even-aged stands to uneven-aged management.

Table III - 4. Silviculture Systems.

APPROPRIATE SILVICULTURE SYSTEMS BY FOREST COVER TYPE			
Forest Cover Type	**Even-Aged**	**Two-Aged**	**Uneven-Aged**
Ponderosa Pine	Shelterwood, Clearcut, and Seed-Tree	Irregular Shelterwood	Group Selection and Single-Tree Selection
Mixed Conifer	Shelterwood, Clearcut, and Seed-Tree	Irregular Shelterwood	Group Selection and Single-Tree Selection
Aspen	Coppice [1]	Coppice with Standards [2]	Group Selection [3]
Lodgepole Pine	Shelterwood, Clearcut, and Seed-Tree	Irregular Shelterwood	Group Selection
Englemann Spruce and Subalpine-Fir	Shelterwood and Clearcut	Irregular Shelterwood	Group Selection and Single-Tree Selection

1 Coppice is a vegetation reproduction method with clearfelling or clearcutting. Clearfelling (clearcutting) stimulates sprouting from the residual roots.

2 "Standards" are selected overstory trees reserved for a longer rotation at the time each crop of coppice material is cut.

3 Use of group selection as an appropriate silviculture system in aspen is currently under study to determine regeneration success, but is authorized on a test basis.

3. The size of the uncut forest areas between openings must be based on the Management Objectives for the landscape unit being analyzed. If these Objectives include creating a mix of vegetation types to benefit the kinds of wildlife associated with early-successional stages and edges, the uncut units can be small. If the Objectives include provisions for old-growth-associated species, the uncut units could be large enough to function as an ecological system not overly influenced by edge.

4. When trees are harvested to meet timber production objectives, the cutting shall be done in such a way that there is assurance that the technology and knowledge exist to restock these areas adequately with trees within five years after final harvest. Minimum restocking levels are defined in Table III-5.

Table III - 5. Minimum Restocking Levels by Species.

GROWING STOCK: ALL LIVE TREES							
Species	Spruce-fir	Aspen	Douglas-fir	Lodgepole Pine	Ponderosa Pine	Other Softwood	Other Hardwood
Trees per Acre	150	300	150	150	150	150	150

5. No minimum seedling-height requirements are specified. Seedlings must have survived a minimum of one year and be expected (on the basis of research and experience) to be able to produce the desired stand condition specified for this area in the Forest Plan. The numbers of seedlings in the table above represent the minimum number of seedlings required, considering natural mortality, to produce a merchantable-timber stand at rotation age without intermediate treatments. To assure that adequate restocking of openings created as a result of final harvest is accomplished, as a minimum, stocking surveys are conducted at the end of the first and third growing seasons following reforestation treatment. Adequate stocking cannot be certified until after the third-year growing-season survey.

6. “Five years after final harvest” means five years after clearcutting, five years after the final overstory removal in the shelterwood and seed-tree systems, or five years after selection cutting. The requirement for adequate restocking within five years is initiated by the final harvest. The timing of the first- and third-year restocking surveys is initiated by the reforestation treatment.

7. Where disease can be spread from an uncut stand to a newly regenerated stand, it is desirable to cut the adjacent infected stand before the newly regenerated stand reaches a height of six feet.

8. Regulated timber harvest activities will occur on only those lands classified as "Suitable" and "Scheduled" for timber production (See Figure III-1). On Unsuitable or Suitable but not Scheduled lands, limited timber cutting may occur for such purposes as salvage, protection or enhancement of biodiversity or wildlife habitat, scenic-resource management, or to perform research or administrative studies consistent with Management Area direction.

9. Trees will not be marked or harvested within approximately 600 feet slope distance from timberline.

10. Use artificial-regeneration methods when it is not possible to rely on the natural sequence of events or environmental conditions to regenerate the stand within five years.

11. When trees are to be harvested on other than suitable lands, exceptions to the stocking guidelines are appropriate (as documented in project decisions) when the harvest meets one of the following criteria:

    * For permanent openings that serve specific management direction.

    * Where provided for in specific management practices and prescriptions.

    * Where it is desirable to delay the onset of regeneration and crown closure to meet specific Desired Conditions and Management Objectives.

GUIDELINES

1. If the silviculture system being applied to a particular area of the landscape is uneven-aged, harvest trees designated for commercial timber production based on the desired density, as determined by age class or size, and the Objective for the area.

2. Silvicultural Standards and Guidelines should be applied at the watershed and landscape level, as well as to individual stands of trees. The Standards and Guidelines must be applied in such a way as to perpetuate this range of environmental conditions, while supplying goods and services to people. The range of environmental conditions is defined in the Desired Condition statements for the selected alternative. This does not imply the Forest must shoot for the range of natural variability.

3. Fuelwood demand will be reviewed as part of the environmental analyses for proposed timber sales, to determine if timber sale roads should be opened for fuelwood access after the completion of harvest activities. For areas to be opened to fuelwood cutting, decisions will also be made regarding timing and duration of fuels accessibility, in coordination with other resource concerns. Generally, the areas will be open only one to two seasons after completion of harvest activities.

4. Table III-6 gives guidelines for when an opening is no longer considered an opening.

Table III - 6. Opening Guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR WHEN AN OPENING IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED AN OPENING			
Forest Cover Type	**Average Trees per Acre**	**Average Height of Tree**	**Distribution**
Ponderosa Pine and Mixed Conifer			
Big-Game Cover	200	6 feet	70%
Retention and Partial Retention Scenic Condition Objectives	200	25 % of the height of the adjacent stand	
Lodgepole Pine and Spruce/Fir/Aspen			
Big-Game Cover	250	10 feet	70%
Retention and Partial Retention Scenic Condition Objectives	250	25 % of the height of the adjacent stand	

5. Except for treatments designed to enhance meadows, altering more than one-third of the edge of a natural opening will be avoided whenever an artificially created opening is adjacent to a natural opening. Additional edge should not be created until previously treated areas are considered closed, according to guideline #4 above.

6. The landscape should be the primary unit of analysis for silviculture. A landscape is defined here to mean a distinct landform such as a mesa, or a Level VI watershed. There are a great variety of landscape types within the Rocky Mountain Region. Some may contain more than a single forest species. Some are "fine grained" (characterized by many small areas in various stages of plant succession). Others are "coarse

grained" (characteristically forested with large, unbroken expanses of trees and few openings). There are areas in the Region which have become a patchwork of forest and open places as a result of human use prior to establishment of the National Forests, past Forest Service management practices, and natural disturbances (wind, fire, insect activity, and earth movement).

7. In most circumstances, rely on or make primary use of those silviculture systems which ensure regeneration of forest stands through natural seeding and suckering.

8. Use artificial-regeneration methods when we cannot rely on the natural sequence of events and/or environmental conditions to regenerate the forest within five years or earlier.

9. Use thinning practices which consider genetic diversity, as well as competition among the trees for water, nutrients, and light. The frequency of thinning should depend upon the tree species, financial efficiency, and the site growing conditions (as commonly measured by Site Index).

10. Where appropriate, reduce competition between desired trees and other vegetation.

11. The chosen silviculture system should allow emulation of the pattern, timing, and frequency of natural disturbances found in the landscape being treated.

12. Regeneration harvests of even-aged timber stands (sites) should not be undertaken until the stands have generally reached (or surpassed 95 % of the) culmination of the mean annual increment, measured in cubic feet. Exceptions may be made where resource management objectives or special resource considerations require earlier harvest.

Wildlife

STANDARDS

1. Manage human disturbance at caves and abandoned mines where bat populations exist. When closing mines or caves for safety or protection reasons, reduce disturbance of residing bat populations and ensure bat access.

2. Provide adequate cover to maintain screening along roads that are kept open for human use and around openings, so as to minimize disturbance and harassment of deer and elk.

3. In areas where tall, dense cover is desired for ground-nesting birds, residual cover needs to be carried over from previous growing seasons, since some species begin nesting in April and May before spring growth.

2. Some bird species prefer to nest in undisturbed cover. In areas where these species are a primary consideration, manage livestock grazing to avoid adverse impacts on nesting habitat.

4. Protect known active and inactive raptor nest areas. The extent of the protection will be based on proposed management activities, human activities existing before nest establishment, species, topography, vegetative cover, and other factors. A no-disturbance buffer around active nest sites will be required from nest-site selection to fledgling (generally March through July). Exceptions may occur when individuals are adapted to human activity.

5. Where newly discovered Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Sensitive species (TES) habitat is identified, an analysis shall be conducted to determine if any adjustments in the Forest Plan are needed.

6. Activities will be managed to avoid disturbance of Sensitive species that might result in federal listing or loss of population viability. The protection will vary depending on the species, potential for disturbance, topography, location of important habitat components, and other pertinent factors. Special attention will be given during breeding, young rearing, and other times which are critical to survival.

7. Areas should be closed to activities to avoid disturbing Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed species during breeding, young rearing, or at other times critical to survival. Exceptions may occur when individuals are adapted to human activity, or the activities are not considered a threat.

9. If a bald eagle traditional winter roost or nest site is discovered, a management plan will be written to ensure that the necessary habitat components are maintained. In addition, a no-disturbance buffer will be established around the location. The size of the buffer will be determined by the eagle's tolerance of human activity, and local conditions (e.g., topography, vegetative cover).

10. As new recovery plans, conservation agreements, conservation strategies, designations of critical habitat, or Regional

documents that contain accepted management direction for TES species are developed, the Forest Plan will be reviewed to determine consistency with the new documents. Where appropriate, the Plan will be amended to incorporate the new direction.

11. Discourage land-use practices and development which adversely alter or eliminate the hunting habitat or prey base within ten miles, and the immediate habitats within one mile, of a peregrine falcon nesting cliff.

12. Restrict human activities within one mile of a peregrine falcon nest site between February 1 and August 31.

13. No ground-disturbing activity shall be allowed in potential Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly habitat unless a survey is conducted to determine the existence of the species. Ground-disturbing activities include trail building, livestock driveways, or domestic sheep bedding grounds. The usual grazing associated with livestock in the area is not considered ground disturbing. Potential habitat definitions and survey protocols are found in the *Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly Recovery Plan*.

14. If any new Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly populations are discovered, a "No Butterfly Collecting" regulation shall be imposed on the area.

15. Do not allow any even-aged timber management within canyons considered to have potential habitat for Mexican spotted owls, or within one-half mile of the canyon's rim.

16. Allow uneven-aged timber management only if the resulting timber stand contains the necessary habitat components (for native and desirable nonnative species).

17. Develop a fire strategy within potential Mexican spotted owl habitat that will reduce the risk of losing the habitat to a catastrophic fire.

18. If any Mexican spotted owl nests are discovered, limit the amount of human disturbance around the nest through such measures as special area closures, seasonal restrictions, or rerouting of trails.

SECTION 4 - DISTURBANCE PROCESSES

Undesirable Species

STANDARDS

1. Control nonnative and noxious plants throughout the Forest, with priority given to Research Natural Areas and Wilderness. For all proposed projects or activities, determine the risk of noxious-weed introduction or spread, and implement appropriate mitigation measures.

2. Only certified "weed-free" hay and straw shall be used on the RGNF.

GUIDELINE

1. Develop a noxious-weed and pest management program that addresses the following components: awareness, prevention, inventory, planning, treatment, monitoring, reporting, and management objectives. Priorities for implementing a program for undesirable plants include:

   * New invaders.
   * New areas.
   * Spreading or expanding infestations.
   * Existing infestations.

Fire

GUIDELINES

1. Where feasible and appropriate, use broadcast burning to dispose of slash, return inorganic and organic chemicals in the foliage and small woody material to the soils, reduce fire hazard, and create seedbeds for natural regeneration.

2. Develop and implement a prescribed-fire program, both management- ignited and prescribed natural, which addresses the ecosystem needs and values-at-risk of the entire Forest.

3. Initial-attack response will be planned and designated based on the values at risk and the cost of suppression.

Insects and Disease

GUIDELINES

1. Plan management activities with consideration for potential insect or disease outbreaks. Design management to meet or enhance Management-Area Objectives.

8. Manage vegetation in high-use recreation areas to ensure public safety and to improve forest health, as needed to maintain or improve the desired recreation setting(s).

9. Use integrated pest management techniques, including silvicultural treatments, to meet Management-Area Objectives. Treatment activities will be based on values of, and risks to, adjacent private lands, as well as public land. Priority should be given to areas in which values to be protected exceed the cost of protection. (For example, adjacent to subdivisions, metropolitan areas, recreation sites, or areas of concentrated public use.)

10. Project plans should consider existing infestations of insects or disease within a project area. Activities should be designed to minimize the risks of spreading the infestation, while still providing habitat for those wildlife species dependent on the presence of insects and disease.

2. Control natural insect and disease outbreaks in Wilderness only when justified by predicted loss of resource values outside Wilderness.

SECTION 5 - SOCIAL RESOURCES

Heritage Resources

STANDARD

1. Conduct all land management activities in such a manner as to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Many heritage resources values can be protected effectively through application of the provisions of these regulations:

   * *The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, (P.L. 89-665, as amended).

   * *Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA), (P.L. 101-601).

   * *Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979* P.L. 96-95.

Recreation -- General

STANDARDS

1. Availability of outfitter-guide special-use permits will be based on a capacity study.

2. When capacity has been met for a certain special-use activity, no further permits will be issued.

GUIDELINES

1. Use concessionaire operations whenever possible.

2. Changes in Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class should be documented in a decision memo.

Developed Recreation

STANDARDS

1. Design and manage developed recreation sites according to the adopted ROS class and Scenic Integrity Objective(s).

2. All new or reconstructed developed recreation sites will offer a range of opportunities accessible to people with disabilities, within the limits of the site characteristics.

3. Vegetative-management plans shall be developed and implemented for all developed sites, to enhance the natural setting and maintain or develop the desired vegetation.

4. Camping will be limited to 14 days in any one location within a 30-day period.

5. Facilities at trailheads shall be consistent with the recreation setting and include adequate space for parking, trailhead panels for trail information, and appropriate sanitation facilities.

6. Developed recreation areas will be withdrawn from locatable-mineral entry.

GUIDELINES

1. Use the *Recreation Facility Design Catalog* or other approved designs, if appropriate, to assist the planning and design of recreation facilities. Quality facilities should be designed that require low maintenance and are cost effective.

2. When campground occupancy is less than 20%, analysis shall be conducted to decide whether to close the campground or convert it to a concentrated dispersed site.

3. Each Ranger District should document backlog maintenance and rehabilitation needs and associated costs, and update twice a year.

4. At fee campgrounds, furnish readily available off-site and on-site information on recreation opportunities for developed sites.

Dispersed Recreation

STANDARDS

1. A Scenic Integrity Objective of "High" (“management activities are not evident to the casual visitor and the area appears natural”) will be met within the foreground for all National Scenic and Recreation Trails.

2. Camping is limited to 14 days within a 30-day period.

3. Close, rehabilitate, or otherwise mitigate dispersed sites when:

   * Campsite condition reaches Frisell-Cole Class 4 or 5.
   * Site occupancy does not meet the adopted Scenic Integrity Objective.

* There are social conflicts.
* Unacceptable environmental damage is occurring.

4. If use exceeds the area capacity for a given ROS class, the following management actions, in order of priority, should be employed to address the impacts or effects on the recreation setting:

   * Inform the public and restore the site.
   * Regulate use.
   * Restrict the number of users.
   * Close the area or site.
5. Recreation use will be managed to stay within the capacity for the ROS objective, as shown in Table III-7.

Table III - 7. ROS Use and Capacity Levels.

MAXIMUM USE AND CAPACITY LEVELS FOR EACH RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM CLASS

Ros Class/capacity Range	Very Low	**Low**	**Moderate**	High
Primitive				
On Trails - PAOT/Mile	0.5	1	2	3
Area Wide - PAOT/M Acres	1	2	7	25
Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized				
On Trails - PAOT/Mile	2	3	9	11
Area Wide - PAOT/M Acres	4	8	50	80
Semi-Primitive Motorized				
On Trails - PAOT/Mile	2	3	9	11
Area Wide - PAOT/M Acres	4	8	10	40
Roaded Natural				
On Trails - PAOT/Mile	2	3	9	11
Area Wide - PAOT/M Acre	40	80	1200	2500
Rural				
On Trails - PAOT/Mile	2	3	9	11
Area Wide - PAOT/M Acre	500	800	5000	7500

Capacity Ranges are defined as follows:
VERY LOW and LOW apply to rock, mountain grass, and clearcuts 1 to 20 years old.
MODERATE applies to mountain grass, mature and pole-size ponderosa pine, mature aspen, shelterwood cuts 90 to 120 years old, selection cuts 1 to 20 years old, and clearcuts 80 to 120 years old.
HIGH applies to mature and pole-size spruce, pole-size aspen, and clearcuts 20 to 80 years old.
PAOT = Persons at one time

GUIDELINES

1. Trail development shall be coordinated with trail systems developed by municipalities, counties, states, other federal agencies, and partners.

2. Different accessibility levels will be planned, depending on the nature of the improvement and the principal form of recreation being provided.

3. Loop trails should be considered for all trail networks, especially those constructed in low elevations, for year-round use, associated with campgrounds or other attractions.

4. Congressionally designated National Historic, Scenic, or Recreation Trails and the Colorado Trail will receive higher priority than other trails for reconstruction, operation, and maintenance.

5. Dispersed camping is prohibited within a 100-foot zone around lakes and streams, unless exceptions are justified by terrain.

Wilderness Resources

STANDARDS

1. Minimize controlled driving of permitted livestock in designated Wilderness.

2 Recreational livestock are prohibited within 100 feet of lake-shores and stream banks, except during watering and through travel, unless exceptions are justified by terrain.

3 A permit system (for either day use or overnight use) or other measures, such as area closures, shall be implemented to manage use levels and use patterns, when conditions are outside the Standards and Guidelines established for the Management-Area Prescription.

4. Pristine management areas of a Wilderness should not be changed to a lesser standard of naturalness in order to disperse recreation use from other portions of the Wilderness.

5. Where forage is limited, require users camping overnight with recreational livestock to use processed feeds that are free of viable noxious-weed seeds.

6. Maximum Group size: no more than 15 people per group, with a maximum combination of people and stock not to exceed 25.

7. Prohibit pets from harassing wildlife or people. Voice control or physical restraints are acceptable.

8. Within riparian areas, the tethering of livestock is prohibited.

GUIDELINES

1. Minimize human impacts in Wilderness by considering:

   * Limiting the number of private and outfitter-guide camps.
   * Encouraging the use of self-contained stoves, or prohibiting fires which would require the use of self-contained stoves.
   * A permit system.
   * Party-size and pack-animal limitations.
   * Prohibiting dogs or requiring them to be on a leash.
   * Implementation of minimum-impact suppression tactics when managing wildfires.

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2. Printed information, where appropriate, will be posted outside Wilderness at trailheads.

Scenic Resources

STANDARDS

1. The Scenic Integrity Level(s), based on current landscape character, are usually accepted as the Scenic Integrity Objective(s) unless highly unusual or special circumstances identify a need to change, and will be limited to:

   * Treatment of small-diameter/suppressed lodgepole pine stands.
   * Harvest as a result of a disturbance such as fire, windthrow, or insect and disease infestations.

   Variations in the Scenic Integrity Objectives may dominate the valued landscape character, but must borrow from the valued attributes such as size, shape, edge effect, and pattern of natural openings, and still meet the minimum requirements of the next lower Objective chosen.

2. Management activities which are inconsistent with the Scenic Integrity Objective will be avoided unless a decision is made to change the Scenic Integrity Level. A decision to change the Scenic Integrity Objective will be documented in a project-level NEPA decision document.

3. If field analysis identifies a need to correct the inventory of Scenic Condition Objectives, the correction will be recorded in an environmental analysis document, approved, and the Forest inventory will be updated. Conditions that could warrant a change in Scenic Condition Levels are:

   * Discrepancies in "inherent scenic attractiveness" classification.
   * Changes in "viewer location" and "sensitivity level."
   * Discrepancies in "seen area" mapping.

GUIDELINE

1. For areas which do not currently meet the Scenic Integrity Level, use the interim objective of "Rehabilitation."

SECTION 6 - LAND OWNERSHIP AND SPECIAL USES

Real Estate - Rights-of-way

STANDARD

1. Retain existing access rights where needed to meet Forest Plan Goals and Objectives.

Real Estate - Land Adjustments

GUIDELINES

1. When there are opportunities to acquire or convey non-federal lands by purchase or exchange, where lands are valuable for National Forest System purposes, the Forest Service should consider whether:

    * The conveyance or acquisition would reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improve management efficiency. This includes reducing miles of landline boundaries and numbers of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled-ownership livestock pastures, and other factors which decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.

    * The conveyance or acquisition would reduce conflicts between Forest Service and private-landowner objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management.

2. Opportunities to acquire nonfederal lands by purchase or exchange, where lands are valuable for National Forest System purposes, should be considered when involving:

    * Lands with important characteristics that would enhance National Forest purposes, including access thereto.

    * Lands that will improve administration and reduce trespass.

    * Lands that will add significantly to available National Forest goods and services.

    * Lands that, if acquired, would reduce conflict between Forest Service and private-landowner objectives.

* Lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for a future patent, and where the mineral estate will be donated to the United States (only applicable to acquisition by exchange).

11. Opportunities to convey lands should be considered when involving:

    * Important or unique resources (such as wetlands, floodplains, essential big-game winter range, Threatened or Endangered species habitat, and important historical or heritage resources) that may be conveyed when resource loss is mitigated or offset by acquisition of resource values on nonfederal lands.

    * Lands in developed areas that have lost or are losing their National Forest character.

    * Lands that would contribute to community growth, development, and economic prosperity.

Real Estate - Special Uses - General

STANDARDS

1. Bury electrical-utility lines of 33 kilovolts or less, and telephone lines, unless one or more of the following applies:

    * Scenic Integrity Objectives of the area can be met using an overhead line.
    * Burial is not feasible due to geologic hazard or unfavorable geologic conditions.
    * Greater long-term site disturbance would result.
    * It is not technically feasible.

2. Do not approve new uses, and phase out current uses, including landfills, where the primary use is storage or disposal of hazardous materials, when the permits expire.

Real Estate - Utility Corridors

STANDARDS

1. Conserve existing and designated inventoried rights-of-way that are identified in the *Western Utility Study*, to protect them for future construction and occupancy.

12. Proposals to use designated utility corridors will be authorized without alternative-route analysis, subject to site-specific environmental analysis.

13. Do not authorize conflicting uses of activities in transportation and utility corridors.

4. Design of utility and transmission line corridors shall blend with the existing character of the landscape.

GUIDELINES

1. Consolidate occupancy of transportation or utility corridors and sites wherever possible and compatible.

14. Management activities in linear corridors should be compatible, to the extent possible, with the Goals of the individual Management Areas through which corridors pass.

Infrastructure - Travelways

STANDARDS

1. Closed or restricted roads may be used for administrative purposes if the use is approved by the District Ranger.

2. Designated travelways, as displayed on the Rio Grande National Forest Visitor Map, and newly constructed travelways are open to motorized-vehicle use unless a documented decision shows that:

   * Motorized use conflicts with Forest Plan Objectives.
   * Motorized use is incompatible with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class.
   * Travelways are in areas closed to motorized use and are not "designated routes."
   * Motorized use creates user conflicts that result in unsafe conditions unrelated to weather conditions.
   * Physical characteristics of travelways are hazardous for motorized use.
   * Travelways do not serve an existing or identified future public need. Or,
   * Financing is not available for maintenance necessary to protect resources.

3. On all lands except designated travelways, motorized use with wheeled vehicles is restricted unless the Forest Map or a Forest Order indicates that such use is specifically allowed. Snow machine use on snow is allowed unless specifically restricted.

4. Perennial stream crossings will be constructed to maintain stream flow sufficient to allow bidirectional movement of adult and juvenile fish and related aquatic organisms.

GUIDELINES

1. Allowable modes of travel shall be clearly signed at each trailhead.

2. New trails will be developed, if necessary, to expand the range of recreation opportunities, ensure user safety, and disperse existing use into different areas.

3. Travelways no longer needed, or that are contributing to resource damage that cannot be mitigated, shall be obliterated, revegetated, and/or sloped to drain.

4. Manage road use by seasonal closure if:

   * Use causes unacceptable damage of soil and water resources due to weather or seasonal conditions.
   * Use causes unacceptable wildlife conflict or habitat degradation.
   * Use results in unsafe conditions due to weather conditions.
   * The road(s) serve a seasonal public or administration need.
   * The area accessed has seasonal need for protection or non-use.

5. Trail systems will offer a wide range of recreation opportunities, both motorized and nonmotorized.

   * A wide range of barrier-free opportunities will be considered for all new-construction or rehabilitation proposals.

Infrastructure - Facilities

STANDARDS

1. Facilities acquired by land donation, exchange, or purchase will not be retained unless they serve a definite future purpose and funding is available for their maintenance, or they are determined to be historically significant.

2. All facilities will be managed according to the Facilities Master Plan.

SECTION 7 - ECONOMIC STANDARDS

Timber Utilization

STANDARD 1. Sawtimber utilization Standards, for live and dead trees are listed in Table III-8. The Standards in Table III-8 apply to the Rio Grande National Forest. (Reference FSH 2409.18, Ch 50)

Table III - 8. Timber Utilization Standards.

TIMBER UTILIZATION STANDARDS				
Type of Product	Minimum Diameter at Breast Height	Top Diameter	Minimum Length	Percent Net Of Gross
Live Trees:				
Sawtimber				
-Coniferous	7-8	5-7	8-10	33.3-50
-Aspen	7-8	5-7	8	50
Products other than Sawtimber	5	4	6.5	Variable
Dead Trees:				
Sawtimber	7-12	7-10	8-16	33.3-50
Products other than Sawtimber	5	4	Variable	Variable