

ESTABLISHMENT REPORT

CHIRICAHUA RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

Coronado National Forest

Cochise County, Arizona

November 29, 1971

NARRATIVE REPORT

I. Principal Distinguishing Features

The proposed Chiricahua Research Natural Area is located within the Chiricahua Wilderness area. The area is characterized by three major vegetation aspects, pine-Douglas-fir, mixed conifer, and aspen. Chiricahua Peak is the highest point within the Wilderness, 9,796 feet, with the eastern portion included within the proposed area.

II. Location

The area is described as part of sections 20, 21, 28, and 29, T. 18 S., R. 30 E., G&SRM, all being unsurveyed. See the attached map for the specific location. It is 14 miles southeast of Chiricahua National Monument on the Douglas Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest.

III. Area By Cover Types

The cover types within the proposed area do not coincide exactly with any of those described in the 1968 RNA publication. However, there are similar ones listed: SAF-16 (mixed conifer), SAF-206 (Englemann spruce), SAF-219 (white pine), and SAF-210 (interior Douglas-fir) that are comparable to the types found within the area. In order to fully define and evaluate the cover types, a detailed inventory will need to be made. The attached map reflects the major vegetation types that presently dominate the area.

IV. Physical And Climatic Conditions

A. Topography

The topography is typically mountainous with the high point being 9,796 feet dropping off to an elevation near 8,100 feet

at a distance of 1.25 miles. There are two major canyons breaking to the east from Chiricahua Peak and eventually into San Simon Creek.

B. Soils

At this time there is only a reconnaissance type soil inventory on the area. However, the soils are generally described as: deep, medium textured well developed soils from rhyolite. At present and under the Forest cover, the soils are relatively stable from an erosion standpoint. Water storage values are good. Some of the area is occupied by rock land and rockslides, however, this is very minor.

C. Climate

The average annual precipitation is approximately 35 inches. This can be further broken down into two major precipitation periods of 20 inches occurring October through April and 15 inches, summer, May through September. Temperatures range from -10° F. in the colder periods to 90° F. in the summer time. The growing season is restricted to approximately a 3½-month period.

D. Vegetation

The proposed area contains primarily: limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmanni*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), and bigtooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum*). There are a few small scattered stands of aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) scattered throughout the area. Total understory vegetation production will average less than 50 lbs. per acre. This coupled with the terrain of the surrounding area makes the site undesirable from a livestock grazing point-of-view. Grazing in the past has ranged from heavy in the few open parks to extremely light or nonexistent over most of the area.

V. Description Of Values

A. Flora

The proposed research natural area offers the following in opportunities in vegetation research:

1. Provides a high quality timber stand that is in as near natural condition as can be found. (The exception to this would be changes incurred as a result of fire protection.)
2. This area is the furthest south that ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmanni*) can be found in the Continental United States.
3. The proposed area is completely surrounded by the Chiricahua Wilderness area. This should add to the value of the site as a research natural area as well as provide possible opportunities for additional studies in the adjacent areas.

B. Recreation

The area being a part of the Chiricahua Wilderness area will be subjected to Wilderness type use by recreationists. However, at this time, this use is extremely light and restricted to the few trails that cross or are adjacent to the proposed area. Should it be desirable, these trails could easily be closed to give added protection to the area.

C. Fauna

Big game populations are very low in the vicinity of this area, there being only an occasional bear to be found. It is possible that numerous small game and songbird species are found to frequent the area. No attempt was made to identify these species. This should be done.

D. Other

There are no other known values within the area.

VI. Appendix

A. Plant list

B. Map

1. Topographic

2. Type map

C. Pictures

SIGNATURES

DATE: 11/29/71

Robert M. Williamson
R-3 Research Natural Area Committee

12/8/71

/s/ Clyde W. Doran
Forest Supervisor

3/27/72

W. D. Hunt
Regional Forester

Paul F. Wenger
Director - Rocky Mountain Forest & Range
Experiment Station

Director, Division of Recreation

Deputy Chief, Research

ORDER

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Secretary of Agriculture under Regulation 36 CFR 251.23, I hereby designate as the Chiricahua Research Natural Area the lands described in the preceding report by the Region 3 Research Natural Area Committee, dated November 29, 1971; said lands shall hereafter be administered as a Research Natural Area, subject to the set regulations and instructions thereunder.

Date

Chief

APPENDIX A

The following is a partial list of plants in the general area. A complete description of flora and fauna will require more time and seasonal surveys.

TREES

White fir
Bigtooth maple
Quaking aspen
Bitter cherry
Douglas-fir
Elderberry
New Mexico locust
White spruce
Ponderosa pine
Mexican white pine
Scouler willow

Abies concolor
Acer grandidentatum
Populus tremuloides
Prunus virginiana
Pseudotsuga taxifolia
Sambucus neomexicana
Robinia neomexicana
Picea engelmanni
Pinus ponderosa
Pinus flexilis
Salix scouleriana

GRASSES

Bearded wheatgrass
Slender
Bentgrass
Three-awn
Pine dropseed
Nodding brome
California brome
Reedgrass
Fescue
Mountain muhly
Screwleaf muhly
Mutton bluegrass
Kentucky bluegrass
Pringle needlegrass

Agropyron subsecundum
Agropyron trachycaulum
Agrostis scabra
Aristida arizonica
Blepharoneuron tricholepis
Bromus anomalus
Bromus carinatus
Calamagrostis sp.
Festuca sp.
Muhlenbergia montana
Muhlenbergia virescens
Poa fendleriana
Poa pratensis
Stipa pringlei

GRASSLINE PLANTS

Sedge
Rush

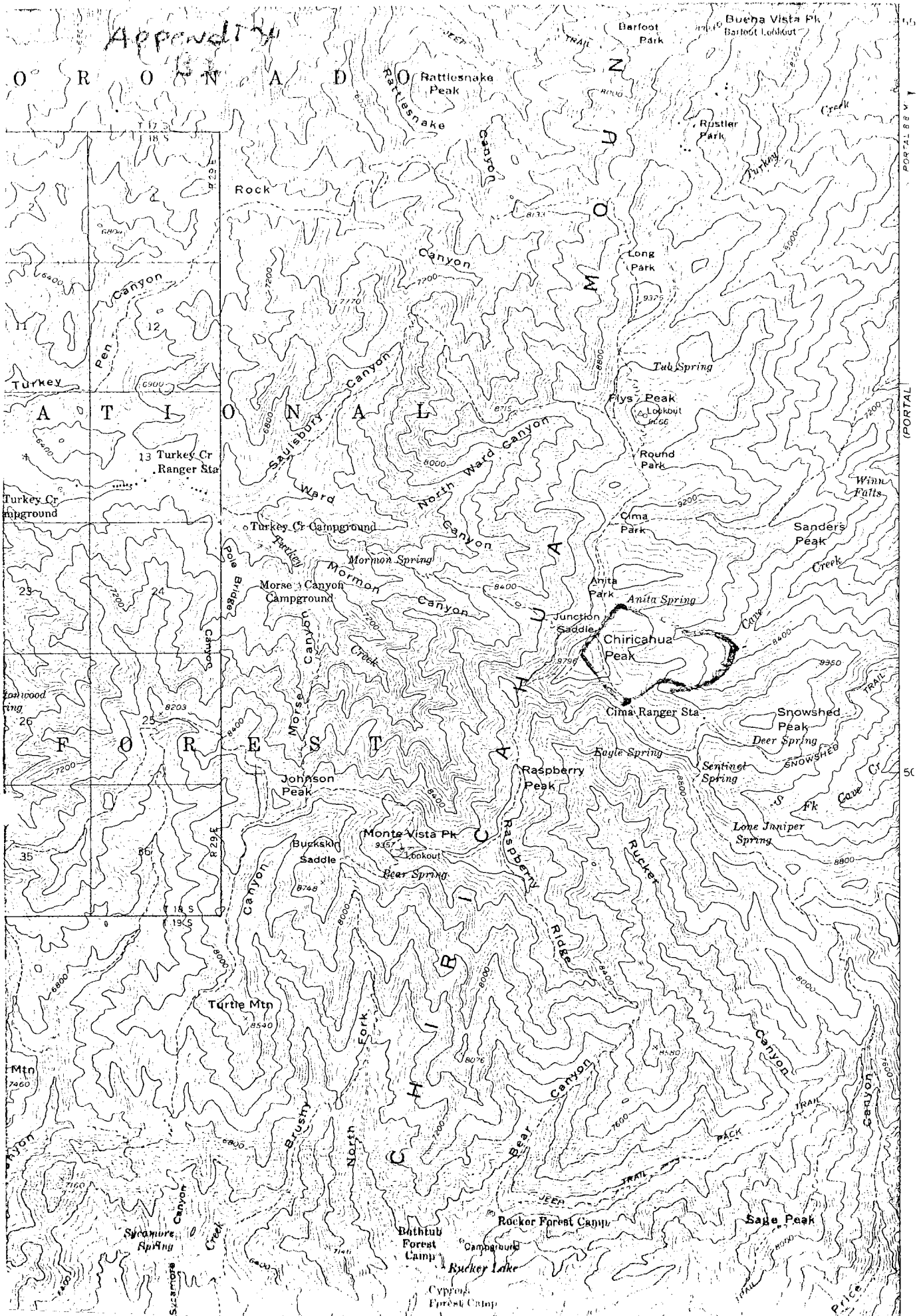
Carex sp.
Juncus sp.

FORBS

Yarrow
Agoseris
Onion
Columbine
Aster
Milkvetch
Mustard
Paintbrush
Carrot
Larkspur
Shootingstar
Fleabane
Geranium
Strawberry
Monkshood
Bellflower
Horsetail
Avens
Rocky Mountain Iris
Lupine
Penstemon
Knotweed
Pyrola
Groundsel
Vetch

Achillea sp.
Agoseris sp.
Allium sp.
Aquilegia sp.
Aster sp.
Astragalus sp.
Brassica sp.
Castilleja sp.
Daucus pusillus
Delphinium sp.
Dodecatheon sp.
Erigeron sp.
Geranium sp.
Fragaria sp.
Aconitum sp.
Campanula sp.
Equisetum sp.
Geum sp.
Iris missouriensis
Lupinus sp.
Penstemon sp.
Rolygonum sp.
Pyrola sp.
Senecio sp.
Vicia sp.

Appendix



PORTAL

50

PRICE

APPENDIX C



AUG . 71 . . .



AUG . 71 . . .