



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southwestern
Region



Environmental Impact Statement, Santa Fe National Forest Plan

2. ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

The remaining alternatives provide unbalanced soil and water management practices with either larger amounts of acres in an unsatisfactory condition with greater project investment (Alternative 2) or smaller soil losses because of lack of any management activity at all (Alternative 6).

Santa Fe
Watershed

Alternative PA, 2, 3 and 6 keep the Watershed closed to public entry during the first decade while the opportunity for a study is available to resolve questions about management direction. Alternative 6 makes no attempt to come to a resolution and retains the Watershed closure. Recreation opportunities are forgone in Alternatives PA, 2 and 3 for at least ten years, while in Alternative 6 there are forgone forever. Water quality would be unchanged from the current situation.

Alternative 5 opens the whole Watershed to semiprimitive non-motorized recreation use but does not permit any grazing or timber management. Trail construction would provide safe and easy access to all Forest land within the watershed. Patrols would ensure that private land trespass is limited. Water quality would be unchanged from the current situation.

Alternative 4 opens the whole Watershed to all commodity production. The area would be managed for recreation, grazing and timber production. The potential for adversely affecting water quality is highest in this alternative.

Research
Natural Areas

Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 allow for maintaining Monument Canyon as the only established research natural area (RNA) on the Forest. Alternatives 2, 5, and PA maintain the Monument Canyon RNA and establish two additional RNA's in Canada Bonito and Mesita De Los Ladrones. Alternative 5 would also propose the establishment of a Forest zoological/botanical area in Pajarito Canyon. This special area would not be part of the RNA system, but would have similar goals for protection and study.

Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 result in the continued removal of 575 acres from the suitable timber base. These alternatives also result in the loss of the existing opportunity to nominate and select RNA's from areas that have not been significantly affected by human activities. Continued management of the Monument Canyon area as an RNA preserves a significant natural ecosystem as a source of base-line data. This can be used as a base against which the effects of human activities can be measured. It also provides a study area for research of natural processes in an undisturbed ecosystem and maintains a gene pool preserve for plant and animal species. However, this area alone will not significantly contribute to the achievement of RNA goals.

Alternatives 2 and PA also result in the removal of 575 acres from the suitable timber base, while Alternative 5 removes 1,227 acres. However, three individual, significant natural ecosystems on the Forest are preserved for the reasons discussed above. Implementation of any one of these alternatives will significantly contribute to the achievement of Regional RNA goals to provide a representative array of RNA's.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

SEARCH NATURAL AREAS

roduction

Research Natural Areas (RNA's) are set aside to provide representative habitat types and natural communities for research and study. The alternatives propose different combinations of RNA proposals. Special Interest Areas are discussed here only because the alternatives proposed areas with unique botanical values. The Special Interest Area program is not part of the Research Natural Area program.

Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 allow for maintaining Monument Canyon as the only established research natural area (RNA) on the Forest. Alternatives 2, 5, and PA maintain the Monument Canyon RNA and establish two additional RNA's in Canada Bonito and Mesita De Los Ladrones. Alternative 5 would also propose the establishment of a Special Interest Area for zoological/botanical values in Pajarito Canyon. Alternative PA would establish a Special Interest Area for the unique botanical values of a Canadian Dogwood community. This Canadian Dogwood community is located in the East Fork of the Jemez River area. No other alternatives proposed Special Interest Areas. A consistent evaluation process and programmatic approach is needed before this management tool can be fully and appropriately employed.

Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 result in the continued removal of 575 acres from the suitable timber base. These alternatives also result in the loss of the existing opportunity to nominate and select RNA's from areas that have not been significantly affected by human activities. Continued management of this 640 acres as an RNA preserves a significant natural ecosystem as a source of base-line data against which the effects of human activities can be measured, provides a study area for research of natural processes in an undisturbed ecosystem, and maintains a gene pool preserve for plant and animal species. However, this will not significantly contribute to the achievement of RNA goals.

Alternatives 2 and PA also result in the removal of 575 acres from the suitable timber base, while Alternative 5 removes 1,227 acres. However, three individual, significant natural ecosystems on the Forest are preserved for the reasons discussed above. Implementation of any one of these alternatives will significantly contribute to the achievement of Regional RNA goals to provide a representative array of RNA's.

versible and
trievable
itments

Alternatives 3, 4, and 6 result in forgone opportunities for commodity production (timber, firewood, grazing) on 640 acres in this planning period. Multiple use resource commitments of land areas presently qualifying and proposed as additional RNA's will significantly affect a future decision to manage them as RNA's. There is a high probability that the opportunity to manage those areas as RNA's will not be available in the future. Alternatives 2 and PA result in foregone opportunities for commodity production (timber, firewood, grazing) on an additional 800, while Alternative 5 totals 1530 acres. There will be no irreversible resource commitments.