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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is to provide strategic guidance for future management of all National Forest System (NFS) lands managed by the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) and lands within the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), except for those lands included in the BLM's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. This LRMP guides the restoration or maintenance of the health of these lands to promote a sustainable flow of uses, benefits, products, services, and visitor opportunities. It provides a framework for informed decision making, while guiding resource management programs, practices, uses, and projects. It does not include specific project and activity decisions. Those decisions are made later, after more detailed analysis and further public involvement. The LRMP is adaptive in that it can be amended to update the management direction based on new knowledge and information.

This LRMP is strategic in nature and does not attempt to prescribe detailed management direction to cover every possible situation. While all components necessary for resource protection and restoration are included, the LRMP also provides flexibility needed to respond to uncertain or unknown future events and conditions such as fires, floods, climate change, changing economies, and social changes that may be important to consider at the time future decisions are made. Implementation of the LRMP is contingent upon future funding and staffing levels.

The LRMP has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the BLM's planning regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600, the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), and the 1982 U.S. Forest Service (USFS) planning regulations (36 CFR 219) as allowed by the transition provision of the 2000 regulations (36 CFR 219.35, revised 2004; the 2012 forest planning regulations currently in effect allow use of the previous regulations for plan revisions initiated before the 2012 regulations took effect [36 CFR 219.17 (b) (3), 2012]). This LRMP is also accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) as required by the regulations used in its development (43 CFR 1601.0–1601.6 and 36 CFR 219.10).

1.2 Planning Area: Tres Rios Field Office and San Juan National Forest

The SJNF and TRFO lie amidst the mesas and mountains of southwest Colorado at the junction of the Southern Rockies and the Colorado Plateau (Figure 1.1). Elevations within the area range from about 4,900 to 14,000 feet above mean sea level. These lands consist of diverse landscapes, including large expanses of relatively pristine lands and other areas that are more developed, with roads and a wider variety of human activities evident. The planning area provides opportunities for a broad range of human activities and uses, as well as natural processes, to occur.

The SJNF and TRFO are known for beautiful scenery, outstanding prehistoric and historic features, relatively unconfined recreation opportunities of high quality, and clean water and air. A large portion of the water in southwest Colorado originates in mountainous, headwaters areas of these public lands. The people of southwest Colorado have a strong tie to public lands and participate in their management. Many existing relationships and partnerships with a variety of interests and organizations provide tangible evidence of important attachments to these public lands and offer many opportunities for use, enjoyment, and cooperative stewardship.

SJNF and TRFO lands contain some of the nearest high-elevation areas that offer a cooler-temperature refuge for visitors from states to the south and west. The area is ringed by numerous National Parks and Monuments (including Great Sand Dunes, Chaco, Mesa Verde, Grand Canyon, Canyonlands, and Arches National Parks, as well as Hovenweep, Canyons of the Ancients, and Chimney Rock National Monuments). These factors, plus scenic attractions such as the San Juan Skyway and the Alpine Loop scenic byways, make southwest Colorado a national destination for visitors.

The area has a rich heritage, ranging from pre-Puebloan culture to early Hispanic settlements, hard-rock mining, ranching, and contemporary recreation and retirement communities. There are many Native American communities within a few hundred miles that have connections to the area, including 20 Pueblo communities in New Mexico; the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute in Colorado; the Jicarilla Apache, and Navajo tribes in New Mexico; the Hopi Tribes in Arizona; and the Ute Indian Tribe (Uintah and Ouray Reservation) of northeast Utah.

1.3 Land and Resource Management Planning Overview

USFS and BLM land and resource management planning is an adaptive process that includes plan development, monitoring, and adjustment based on desired social, economic, and ecological conditions and the evaluation of impacts to those conditions. The overall purpose of planning is to ensure responsible land management based on current information that guides land stewardship to best meet the needs of the American people.

The USFS and the BLM have similar missions that drive the planning process for each agency:

> **USFS:** to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.
>
> **BLM:** to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

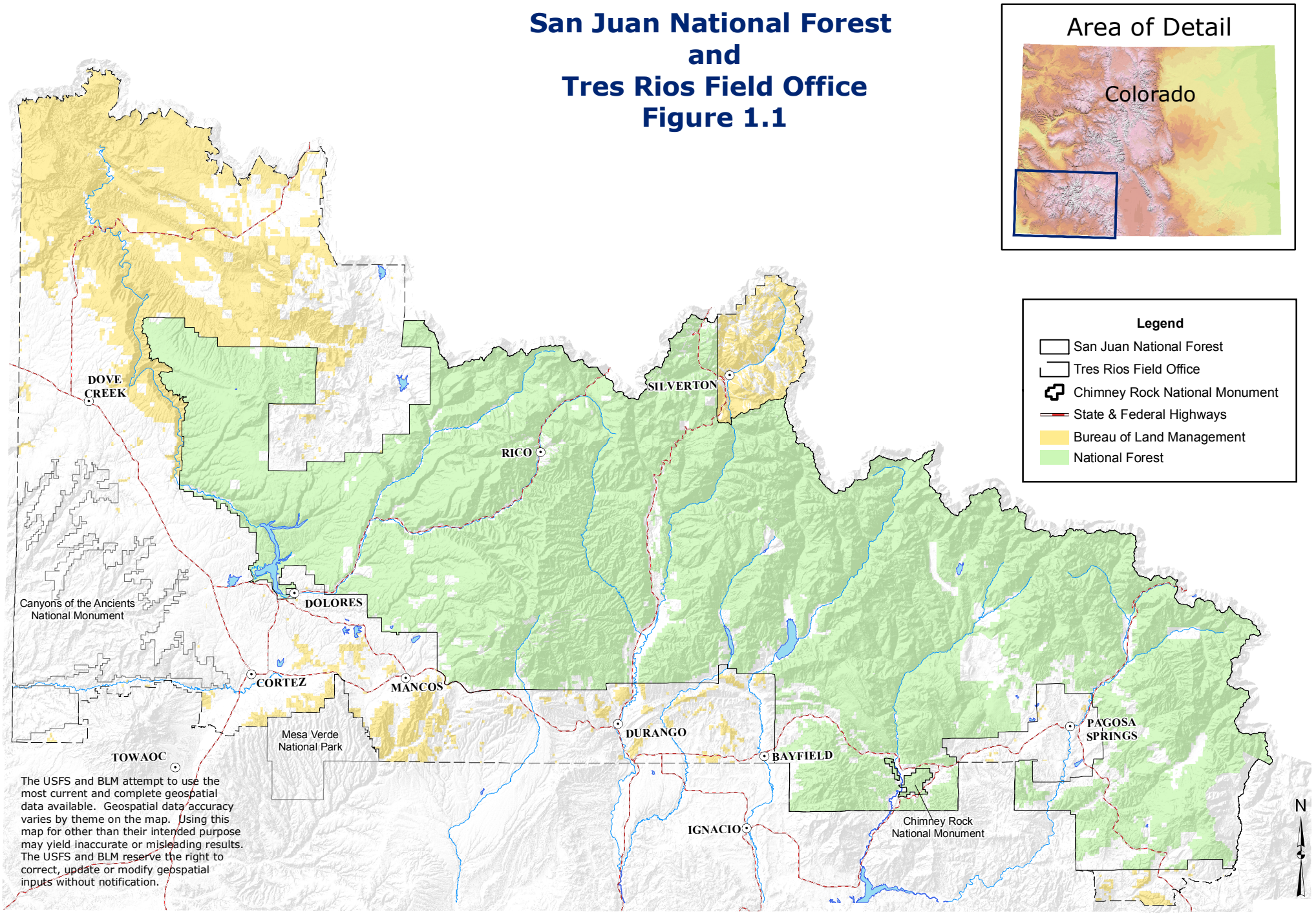
The mission of both agencies is based on the relationship between the American people and their natural resource heritage. This relationship is founded on the principles of sustaining the nation's natural resources for future generations, producing personal and community well-being, and providing economic wealth for the people, communities, and businesses of the nation. Both agencies have strategic plans (as required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 [GPRA], 5 United States Code [USC] 306, 31 USC 1115–1119, and 31 USC 970–-9704) aimed at increasing the accountability of federal agencies by measuring their progress toward achieving agency goals and objectives. The strategic plans were used during the development of this LRMP as guidance for developing desired conditions and outcomes.

While there are differences between the planning processes used by each agency, the fundamentals of land and resource planning are shared by both the BLM and the USFS. The two agencies also share similar missions, partners, issues, and constituents. To enhance customer service and provide better stewardship of the land, the SJNF and the TRFO work closely together under a concept known as "Service First." This joint planning effort is a demonstration of the commitment of both offices to build on this Service First partnership and provide coordinated land management across the public lands of southwest Colorado.

1.3.1 Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service Planning

This LRMP is based on the results of two comprehensive and complementary planning efforts, one being resource data driven and the other being public value driven. The first effort provided technical analyses of conditions and trends for social, economic, and ecological elements related to the SJNF and TRFO. These analyses included consideration of new relevant information and legal and policy changes that have occurred since the current plans were developed.

San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office Figure 1.1



The USFS and BLM attempt to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS and BLM reserve the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

JER
NAD 83, Polyconic Projection
April 24, 2013

0 10 20 40 Miles

The second major effort is to gather and use knowledge of the public regarding their values, knowledge, and uses of SJNF and TRFO lands. The initial public participation effort focused on input related to vision, management challenges, land allocations, desired conditions, objectives, and suitable uses of the planning area. Results from the technical analyses were used in the public participation process to inform, focus, and enhance participant dialogue. Additional information from the public was also gathered during the comment periods that accompanied the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (2007) and the Supplement to the EIS (2011). The assessments and knowledge gained through public involvement were used to develop and shape the LRMP as described in this volume, as well as the other alternatives that are documented in the FEIS (Volume I). These documents do not address every potential topic that may arise in management of the SJNF and TRFO. Rather, they address the issues that the Responsible Officials (USFS Regional Forester and BLM State Director) have determined to be pertinent to this planning process. A summary of public participation activities is given in Volume III, Appendix S.

Planning generally occurs at three levels within both agencies. At the national level of the USFS, the Chief is responsible for the USFS Strategic Plan, as required by the GPRA. The Strategic Plan establishes goals, objectives, performance measures, and strategies for management of the NFS. The SJNF is one administrative unit of this system. Land management plans are developed at the forest level and are approved by the Regional Forester. The third level is for site-specific projects and activities, which are actions that typically fall under the authority of the Forest Supervisor or District Ranger.

At the national level for the BLM, the Director is responsible for the Annual Operating Plan, which falls under the U.S. Department of the Interior's (USDI's) Strategic Plan as required by the GPRA. The Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan establish goals, objectives, performance measures, and strategies for management of BLM's National System of Public Lands. The TRFO is an administrative unit of this system. Resource management plans are typically developed at the field office level and are approved by the State Director. The third level is for site-specific projects and activities, which are actions usually under the authority of the Field Manager.

BLM and USFS management is authorized and guided by many laws, regulations, and policies. In addition, both agencies have a directives system that consists of manuals and handbooks. These contain the agencies' policies and procedures, and serve as the primary basis for the internal management, control of programs, and administrative direction. Unless needed to provide context, clarity, or emphasis, direction from these sources will not be reiterated in this LRMP. Within the flexible and adaptive framework of both agencies' planning regulations and directives, the guidance set forth by this LRMP should continue to provide a meaningful framework and vision for management into the foreseeable future.

1.3.2 Relationship of the LRMP to Other Planning Documents

This LRMP will replace the current San Juan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, approved in 1983 and amended 22 times, including a significant, comprehensive amendment in 1992 (USFS 1992a). It will also replace the portions of the current San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, approved in 1985 and amended seven times, that are currently within the jurisdiction of the TRFO (previously known as the San Juan Resource Area), with the exception of the lands within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, which are managed under a plan approved in 2010. The BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office is in the initial stages of revising the plan for other lands covered by the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan.

This LRMP is one key document in a set of documents that integrates and displays information relevant to management of SJNF and TRFO lands. Other documents that will form the administrative record for the LRMP include the FEIS; appendices; the Record of Decision (ROD); social, economic, and ecological assessments; the Analysis of the Management Situation report; public participation documentation; objections and disposition record; administrative corrections; and other relevant material. Together these documents provide the background of information, comprehensive analyses, and public involvement that are being used to inform the final decisions for this LRMP.

A separate decision that has been incorporated into this document, apart from the LRMP, is determining the NFS lands that will be administratively available for mineral leasing and the associated stipulations for

leasing. A similar decision for BLM lands is made as part of the resource management plan decision. The USFS considers leasing availability decisions to be separate from planning decisions, but closely linked with both planning- and project-level components; therefore, the USFS leasing availability decision has been incorporated into this planning effort.

While this LRMP will be the primary guide to management of the SJNF and TRFO lands, there are several federal, state, tribal, and local planning documents that influence management of nearby lands in southwest Colorado, which have been considered throughout this planning process and reviewed for consistency with this LRMP. An analysis of these plans is provided in Volume III, Appendix W.

1.3.3 LRMP Consistency

All projects and activities authorized by the BLM and the USFS must be consistent with LRMP (16 USC 1604(i), 43 CFR 1601.5-3). A project or activity will be considered consistent with this LRMP if it is consistent with the desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, suitability determinations, allowable uses, and other management actions and decisions approved in the LRMP.

If a project or activity as proposed would not be consistent with the LRMP, the Responsible Official has the following options:

- modify the proposal so that the project or activity will be consistent;
- reject the proposal; or
- amend the LRMP contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity is consistent with the LRMP, as amended. The amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity or may apply more broadly.

This LRMP does not grant, withhold, or modify any contract, permit, or other legal instrument, and does not authorize projects or activities, except where specifically noted. Decisions to approve or authorize specific projects are considered separately from the LRMP during the appropriate time to make such decisions. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance is required for any project-level decision that may have an impact on the environment. Project-level decisions must be informed by site-specific analysis through an open, public process. This allows the latest science and public input to be employed at the time decision is to be made.

1.4 LRMP Organization, Content, and Terminology

The management direction and guidance presented in Chapter 2 is organized by resource and resource use, and applies across the entire SJNF and TRFO landscapes, except where specifically noted. Additional plan direction that applies only to specific areas within the SJNF and TRFO is presented in Chapter 3. All of this direction is divided into three interrelated components: 1) *desired conditions*, which, when taken as a whole, make up the vision for management of the planning area; 2) *objectives, suitability, and allowable uses*, which comprise the plan strategy that will be used to achieve the vision; and 3) *standards and guidelines*, which are the criteria and controls used to execute the strategy. This management direction and guidance should be followed in future implementation of projects and activities, and is also referred to as the *plan components,* or *LRMP components*. The purpose of each of these plan components is described in greater detail below. The number of plan components under each resource or area varies due to the varying complexity of the resource, the extent of existing management direction already provided by law and policy, the need for action, and SJNF and TRFO priorities. Some resources or areas may not include all types of plan components.

Finally, a monitoring plan has been developed to evaluate progress toward achieving desired conditions and objectives, and to determine how well management requirements, such as standards and guidelines, are being applied. Programmatic direction for monitoring and evaluation is included to provide a framework for subsequent monitoring.

All direction in this LRMP applies to both SJNF and TRFO lands, unless otherwise noted. The LRMP makes no decisions applicable to other ownerships or jurisdictions.

Because this LRMP applies to two different agencies, its format and some of its terminology vary from conventional land and resource management plans for either agency. This LRMP attempts to incorporate the format of both agencies and use the same terminology to the extent possible, but some exceptions exist where needed to match legal or policy direction that differs by agency. Table 1.4.1 shows the terminology used in this document as compared to that which each agency typically uses to identify various types of plan decisions. Definitions for the terminology used in the LRMP tie to each agency's planning guidance as described in Section 1.4.1.

Table 1.4.1: Land and Resource Management Plan Components and U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Decision Types

LRMP Component Terminology	Conventional USFS Plan Decision Terminology	Conventional BLM Plan Decision Terminology
Desired Conditions	Desired Conditions	Goals
Objectives	Objectives	Objectives
Suitability and Allowable Uses	Suitable Uses	Allowable Uses
Standards	Standards	Management Actions
Guidelines	Guidelines	Guidelines

1.4.1 LRMP Components

Desired Conditions

USFS: Desired conditions encompass the overarching goals of land and resource management. They are statements of the social, economic, and ecological attributes and values toward which management strives to achieve and characterize or exemplify the desired outcomes of land management. They describe how the area is expected to look and function in the future. Some desired conditions are general, while others are quite specific.

Desired conditions are aspirations; they may only be achievable over the long term. Collectively, specific projects implemented subsequent to this LRMP should contribute to maintaining and/or achieving desired conditions, but no single project should be expected to contribute to meeting all desired conditions. Identifying and establishing desired conditions is the central focus of this LRMP.

BLM: Desired conditions are broad-scale direction that guides future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. Desired conditions in this LRMP are referred to as "goals" in conventional BLM resource management plans.

Objectives

USFS: Objectives are concise projections of measurable, time-specific intended outcomes. Objectives are a means of progressing toward maintaining and/or achieving desired conditions. As with desired conditions, they are aspirations, not commitments or final project decisions. Implementation and achievement would rely upon sufficient funding and staffing levels.

BLM: Objectives identify specific desired outcomes for resources. Objectives are usually quantifiable and measurable and may have established timeframes for achievement (as appropriate). As with desired conditions, they are aspirations, not commitments or final project decisions. Implementation and achievement would rely upon sufficient funding and staffing levels.

Suitability and Allowable Uses

USFS: Suitability is defined by the capability of an area to accommodate specific uses and activities in a sustainable manner based on the area's inherent biophysical characteristics, public input, and balancing desired conditions for multiple resources. Suitability determinations are general determinations derived from modeling exercises at the landscape level that can be refined as necessary at the project level. Suitability determinations in this LRMP are made for the timber, grazing, and travel programs. The allowable use tables in Chapter 3 portray suitability of these uses for specific areas and also identify other activities that are allowed, restricted, or prohibited within each area.

BLM: Allowable uses refer to those allocations that identify surface lands and/or subsurface mineral interests where uses are allowed, restricted, or prohibited to meet desired conditions or objectives.

Standards

USFS: A standard is an approach or condition that is determined to be necessary to meet desired future conditions and objectives, and/or to ensure the long-term viability of resources. A standard (worded as "must" or "shall") describes a course of action that must be followed or a level of attainment that must be reached. Deviations from standards would require analysis and documentation through a subsequent land management plan amendment.

BLM: Standards are actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes, including actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health. Actions include proactive measures, as well as measures or criteria that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities occurring on public land. Standards in this LRMP are referred to as "management actions" in conventional BLM resource management plans.

Guidelines

USFS: A guideline (worded as "should") is presumptively a requirement to meet desired future conditions and objectives, and/or to ensure the long-term viability of resources. Guidelines are put forward in this LRMP in recognition that there may be circumstances that could generate or require alternative, more appropriate means for meeting desired future conditions and objectives, and/or to ensure the long-term viability of resources. It is also recognized that there may be limited individual circumstances where the need for a guideline no longer exists or the applicability of a guideline is otherwise altered (e.g., changes in surrounding land use that may render a guideline ineffective). In these situations a guideline has been determined to be more appropriate than a standard by allowing some flexibility in approach as conditions change and new information is obtained. The use of guidelines in this LRMP is an acknowledgement that a single ideal approach for meeting our desired future conditions and objectives, and/or ensuring the long-term viability of resources may yet to be identified, and that there may be nuances in any given management situation that warrant a modified approach. If the Responsible Official for a project decision finds that deviation from a guideline is necessary, he or she must record the reasons for deviation as part of the project decision and explain how the intent of the guideline—as established by the desired future conditions and objectives, and/or need to ensure long-term viability of resources—is being met through alternative means. If the intent of the guideline is met through alternative means, a land management plan amendment typically would not be required.

BLM: A guideline refers to a practice, method, or technique determined to be appropriate to meet or move towards a desired condition. Guidelines may be adapted or modified when monitoring or other information indicates the guideline is not effective.

Additional Guidance

The development and implementation of projects on BLM and NFS land is also guided by other sources, including applicable federal laws and regulations, executive orders, directives (manuals and handbooks), state and local laws and regulations, and best management practices (BMPs). This LRMP includes references to other applicable guidance where appropriate, but guidance from laws, regulations, policies, and agency directives is generally not detailed unless necessary to emphasize or highlight information.

1.4.2 Administrative Actions

Administrative actions are the day-to-day activities required to serve the public and to provide optimum management of SJNF and TRFO resources. These actions are allowable by regulation and do not require authorization within this LRMP and generally do not require site-specific analysis under NEPA. For example, in day-to-day management of the TRFO, the BLM is responsible for law enforcement activities that need not be authorized under the LRMP. Additionally, the SJNF may authorize or restrict access in certain areas in emergency situations (such as wildfire) or coordinate with other agencies and organizations, such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), for specific activities that may not require site-specific NEPA documentation efforts. Other examples of administrative actions include, but are not limited to, mapping, surveying, inventory, monitoring, and research studies. These and other administrative actions will be conducted in the within the SJNF and TRFO, sometimes in partnership with other landowners, agencies, or entities. The degree to which these actions are carried out depends on agency policies, available personnel, funding levels, and further environmental analysis and decision-making, as appropriate.

1.5 Opportunities and Challenges in the San Juan National Forest and Tres Rios Field Office

1.5.1 Distinctive Nature of the Planning Area

The SJNF and TRFO have distinct characteristics that set them apart from other places. Some key characteristics are described below.

Diverse Geography

The SJNF and TRFO, which lie within the Colorado Plateau and Southern Rocky Mountains ecoregions, display tremendous geographic diversity. They range from about 4,900 feet in the canyon country (near the Utah border) to over 14,000 feet in the high peaks of the San Juan Mountains. The tremendous geologic, topographic, climatic, and vegetative diversity associated with these lands supports an unusually broad variety of biodiversity, as well as a wide range of habitats for flora and fauna. The variety of ecosystems found throughout the planning area, including semi-desert grasslands, pinyon-juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine forests, spruce-fir forests, alpine tundra, riparian areas, and wetlands, offer exceptional diversity in scenery and recreational opportunities.

Scenery and Tourism

The diverse geography of the planning area provides for remarkable scenery and attracts many visitors. The proximity to numerous national parks and national monuments in the Four Corners (including Mesa Verde, Grand Canyon, Canyonlands, and Arches National Parks, as well as Hovenweep, Canyons of the Ancients, and Chimney Rock National Monuments), as well as scenic attractions (including the San Juan Skyway, the Alpine Loop Scenic Byway, and the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad), make southwest Colorado a national destination for visitors.

Recreation

The size and the diversity of the planning area make a vast array of recreational opportunities activities possible, including scenic driving, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, hunting, boating, and guided trips. Past mining, logging, and grazing activities have created an impressive transportation network that provides people access to public lands to engage in the recreational experiences they seek.

Undeveloped Lands

Within the planning area, there are large undeveloped lands where natural ecological processes proceed with minimal human interference. These lands provide habitat for wide-ranging species, as well as linkages that facilitate species movements and gene flow. They act as reserves that protect the ecosystems and the full range of biological diversity within them. The planning area includes over 420,000 acres designated as

wilderness, including the Weminuche, the largest wilderness area in Colorado. There are an additional 566,100 acres of Colorado Roadless Areas (CRAs) within the SJNF and over 120,000 acres of BLM lands with wilderness characteristics, including wilderness study areas (WSAs).

Heritage Resources

The lands within the planning area have a long and rich prehistoric and historic record that goes back approximately 10,000 years. Within the area, many important discoveries and a great depth of archeological research has taken place. The archeological record of the area contains evidence of the earliest agricultural societies in the region. The historic record includes artifacts of Spanish and Euro-American explorers, trappers, miners, and settlers. This long record of human occupation has left one of the highest densities of prehistoric and historic cultural resources found anywhere in the United States.

Energy Minerals

The lands within the planning area contribute significantly to the nation's ability to produce natural gas. At least 90 billion cubic feet (which is enough energy to heat a million homes) are produced annually. The utilization of the rich mineral resources of the planning area need not only be done in such a way that it means getting the most amount of resource as is practicable for the minimal amount of disturbance, and that the taxpayer, federal, state, and local governments, get the maximum royalty (as applicable) for minerals produced on public lands. This means making sure that BMPs are used to prevent waste and verify production. It also means making sure that utilization of one mineral resource is not done in such a way that it might preclude or diminish the ability to be utilized in the future.

American Indian Rights and Interest

The SJNF and TRFO work collaboratively with the 26 Native American tribes and pueblos that claim cultural affiliation with lands under each agency's jurisdiction to ensure that management issues of concern to the tribes and pueblos are addressed. Below is a list of tribes and pueblos that claim cultural affiliation with SJNF and TRFO lands. All applicable USFS and BLM policy addressing tribal treaty rights and federal trust responsibilities will continue to be followed. The SJNF and TRFO recognize the unique sovereign nation status that the Native American tribes and pueblos have with the United States government.

Tribes and Pueblos that Claim Cultural Affiliation with SJNF and TRFO Lands

- Jicarilla Apache Nation
- Kewa Pueblo (formerly Pueblo of Santo Domingo)
- Navajo Nation
- Ohkay Owingeh (formerly Pueblo of San Juan)
- Pueblo of Acoma
- Pueblo of Cochiti
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Pueblo of Laguna
- Pueblo of Nambe
- Pueblo of Picuris
- Pueblo of Pojoaque
- Pueblo of San Felipe
- Pueblo of San Ildefonso
- Pueblo of Sandia
- Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Pueblo of Santa Clara
- Pueblo of Taos
- Pueblo of Tesuque
- Pueblo of Zia
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- The Hopi Tribe
- Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- Zuni Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute and the Southern Ute tribes are both major contributors to the area economy and are among the largest employers in Montezuma and La Plata Counties, respectively. Both tribes have diversified

economies including gaming, oil and gas development, and natural resource development on tribal lands. The Southern Ute Tribe also plays a major role in land and housing development in La Plata County.

The Brunot Agreement

The Brunot Agreement, ratified by Congress in 1874, withdrew over 5,000 square miles in the mountains of southwest Colorado from the 1868 Ute Reservation. The agreement, entered into between the United States (as represented by Felix Brunot) and the Ute Indians in Colorado, was passed into law (18 Stat., 36) by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the U.S. Congress on April 29, 1974 (after Congress decided in 1871 that the United States would no longer make treaties with Native American tribes, yet continued to interact with Native American tribes in much the same manner through executive orders and agreements enacted as statutes). Under the "reserved rights doctrine," hunting rights on reservation lands relinquished by the Utes were retained; that is, the tribes retained such rights as part of their status as prior and continuing sovereigns. Article II of the Bruno Agreement specified that "the United States shall permit the Ute Indians to hunt upon said lands so long as the game lasts and the Indians are at peace with the white people." The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's hunting rights were acknowledged when the tribe sued the State of Colorado for their historical hunting rights in 1978. The rights were granted to the tribe under a consent decree that gave enrolled members of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe the right to hunt deer and elk in the Brunot area for subsistence, religious, or ceremonial purposes. The consent decree specified that tribal members may hunt deer and elk without a state license year-round, providing that they obtain a tribal hunting permit. In 2013, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe re-negotiated this agreement with the State of Colorado to include the Tribe's fishing rights and the right to hunt a certain number of black bears, moose, mountain goats, big horn sheep and mountain lions, in addition to the existing take of elk and mule deer within the Brunot area. Other game animals may be hunted without a license and without bag limits, but only during hunting seasons established by CPW. In 2008, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe signed an agreement with the State of Colorado which reinstated their hunting and fishing rights within the Brunot area. The SJNF and TRFO will continue to ensure that the hunting and fishing rights of the 1873 Brunot Agreement are upheld on public lands under their management jurisdictions. In exercising their Brunot hunting rights, the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribal members are required to adhere to federal policy and regulations designed to protect natural and cultural resources.

The SJNF and TRFO will continue to allow tribal members to collect botanical and other special forest products from public lands within the constraint of ecological sustainability. The SJNF and TRFO will also coordinate and collaborate with tribal governments to increase awareness and knowledge of culturally significant plants, and will consider potential impacts on culturally significant plants in project design and implementation. Prescribed burn plans, noxious weed control, and other management projects should address and consider traditional uses and traditional management of culturally significant plants.

Important cultural areas and traditional cultural properties will be protected for current and future tribal use. The SJNF and TRFO will continue to consult with tribes and pueblos, and knowledgeable individuals to identify important cultural areas and traditional cultural properties. If requested by the tribes, the SJNF and TRFO will keep information on such localities and uses confidential.

The SJNF and TRFO will maintain and strengthen the existing relationship of government-to-government consultation between the USFS and BLM and these 26 Native American tribes and pueblos. The SJNF and TRFO will develop consultation protocols and other formal agreements between the USFS and BLM and Native American Indian Tribes with direct communication between USFS and BLM line officers and tribal officials. The SJNF and TRFO will provide opportunities for tribal participation and partnerships in educational, interpretive, social, and economic programs and will continue to work with the tribes and pueblos to educate the public on appropriate and respectful etiquette when visiting culturally sensitive sites.

1.5.2 Management Challenges

There are several unique management challenges on public lands in southwest Colorado related to the distinct characteristics of the area described above. These challenges, summarized below, were considered by the agencies and the public in developing plan guidance and frame much of what is presented in this LRMP.

Meeting Recreation Demand

The local population surrounding the SJNF and TRFO is projected to increase by approximately 66,500 residents by 2040 (see Section 3.30 of the FEIS for demographic projections). Demand for recreational opportunities is expected to increase, along with the increase in the population. Anticipating demand for changing recreational opportunities—such as greater interest in downhill-specific mountain bike routes or geo-caching—is important as well. Meeting this increasing demand without compromising the integrity of ecosystems requires careful planning and management.

Balancing Multiple Uses

Land management conflicts are common within the planning area, especially as people engaging in different uses increasingly compete for the same piece of land. SJNF and TRFO lands that are adjacent to private lands (referred to as the wildland-urban interface, or WUI) can also create a number of management challenges, including fire management, fuels reduction, recreation conflicts, and wildlife habitat preservation/protection as well as energy and mineral exploration and development. Complex land ownership patterns also create management challenges, including issues and conflicts in relation to boundaries, easements, public access, and roads.

Managing Water-related Issues

Water-related issues will continue to present complex and significant challenges throughout the planning area. Public land managers will continue to be called upon to maintain clean water, protect water-dependent ecosystems, protect rare or threatened and endangered aquatic species, and perform watershed restoration while, at the same time, continuing to supply water for a variety of existing and future consumptive needs and multiple uses.

The population surge in the West continues to increase the diversion and the consumptive use of water and, at the same time, increases the demand for water-based recreation. Changes in the status quo of water appropriation and the complexity of federal water management policy are a deep concern of state governments and senior water rights holders. The ongoing regional drought has accelerated state initiatives designed to develop new water storage and diversion projects of various sizes. Regional climate shifts and global climate change could further exacerbate the complexity of these issues.

Climate Change

Because we do not understand every complex interaction between a warming climate and the ecosystems of SJNF and TRFO lands, the vision and strategies for climate change in this LRMP focus primarily on maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of SJNF and TRFO lands and focusing on ecosystems that have already demonstrated sensitivity or are considered most at risk. In the short term, both the USFS and BLM plan to continue improving their understanding of ecosystem changes. The agencies also intend to pursue long-term monitoring projects. There are many flora and fauna populations that are vulnerable because of their narrow range of habitat, small populations, or limited ability to adapt or tolerate change. Specific strategies have been developed for these vulnerable species, as well as for important ecosystems that are already undergoing rapid change.

The SJNF's and TRFO's response to ecosystem change as a result of climate change includes a variety of adaptation and mitigation strategies. The primary strategy will be to manage for healthy, resilient ecosystems. It is also recognized that ecosystems have always been dynamic. Early detection of ecosystem changes that result from climate change will require detailed, regularly scheduled monitoring.

Desired conditions and objectives for climate change are interrelated with managing for healthy ecosystems. LRMP components related to climate change are dispersed throughout the resource sections of the LRMP and are all identified in Volume III, Appendix G.

Administrative and permitted activities on the SJNF and TRFO will emit the lowest practicable greenhouse gas emissions and have the smallest ecological footprint possible to promote sustainable natural resource management. In addition, the SJNF and TRFO will continue to explore and increase the use of renewable energy to power administrative facilities.