

Description of Alternatives 1-5

**Carson National Forest
Land Management Plan Revision
July 2019**

This is an excerpt of appendix B from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Appendix B – Description of Alternatives

This appendix describes each alternative and the specific changes to plan content that reflect the theme of that alternative. The draft land management plan (hereinafter referred to as “the draft plan”) is described in alternative 2. Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 are the same as alternative 2, except as noted in this section. Only those plan components and other plan content (e.g., management area descriptions) that differ among alternatives are listed in this appendix. If a component or other content from the draft plan is not shown below, it means it is consistent across all plan alternatives.

Description of Alternatives

Alternative 1 (Current 1986 Plan)

The regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require the alternatives analysis in an environmental impact statement to “include the alternative of no action” (40 CFR 1502.14(d)). There are two distinct interpretations of “no action” that must be considered, depending on the nature of the proposal being evaluated. In the situation that involves an action such as revising a land management plan, the “no action” is “no change” from current management direction or level of management intensity. To construct an alternative that is based on no management at all would be a useless academic exercise. Therefore, the “no-action” alternative may be thought of in terms of continuing with the present course of action until that action is changed. Consequently, projected impacts of alternative management schemes are compared in the environmental impact statement to those impacts projected for the Carson National Forest’s existing plan. In this case, alternatives would include management plans of both greater and lesser intensity, especially greater and lesser levels of resource development.

Alternative 1 is the Carson National Forest’s current plan (1986), which is over 30-years old. It emphasizes producing timber products; managing quality habitat for Mexican spotted owl and northern goshawk and its prey; providing recreation opportunities to meet demand; and range management. The current plan has no articulated desired conditions for wetlands, seeps and springs, and various riparian ecosystems. It does not recognize the traditional communities and uses that occur on the Carson National Forest or reflect changes in economic, social, and ecological conditions, new policies and priorities, and new information based on monitoring and scientific research. Since this alternative reflects no change in current management, no additional wilderness is recommended. This alternative provides a baseline for estimating the effects of the other alternatives.

Alternative 2 (Draft Plan)

Alternative 2 is the draft plan and was developed to respond to key issues identified during the assessment and public comment period. This alternative provides for restoration and diverse ecosystem services.¹ Alternative 2 addresses the need to better recognize and enhance the Carson National Forest’s role in contributing to local economies, including service-based sectors such as recreation and tourism, timber and forest products, livestock grazing, and other multiple-use related activities and products. Alternative 2

¹ Ecosystem services are benefits people obtain from ecosystems, including: provisioning services (e.g., clean air, fresh water, energy, food, fuel, forage, wood products or fiber, and minerals); regulating services (e.g., long-term storage of carbon, climate regulation, water filtration, purification, and storage; soil stabilization, flood and drought control, and disease regulation); supporting services (e.g., pollination, seed dispersal, soil formation, and nutrient cycling); and cultural services (e.g., educational, aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural heritage values, recreational experiences, and tourism opportunities).

also includes plan direction that allows for adaptive management, in order to address resource areas at risk of not providing ecosystem services in the future. These include:

- Forested fire dependent ecosystems are departed and prone to uncharacteristic stand replacing fire.
- Grassland communities and herbaceous understories are less productive than they were historically.
- Surface water is at risk across much of the forest, due to temperature, turbidity, and degraded riparian and aquatic condition and function.
- The ability of the Carson National Forest to remain relevant and responsive to changing recreation user demands is at risk of being unsustainable.
- The ability of the Carson National Forest to continue contributing to the social and economic benefits desired by local communities and the visiting public is at risk of being unsustainable.

Alternative 2 proposes roughly 9,189 acres of recommended wilderness.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 was developed to respond to requests for more motorized recreation opportunities, enhanced mountain bike trails, and increased opportunity for fuelwood and timber production for local economic development. This alternative also addresses public comments from those who do not want any additional wilderness on the Carson National Forest.

Alternative 3 emphasizes mechanical treatments for restoration. This alternative deemphasizes road decommissioning and looks for opportunities to convert nonsystem routes to off-highway vehicle and/or mountain bike trails. This alternative does not propose any recommended wilderness areas, to maximize the areas suitable for timber production and to respond to requests for no new wilderness. Neither Valle Vidal nor the San Antonio management areas are included in this alternative. Alternative 3 adds the off-highway vehicle management area to provide off-highway vehicle use in a rugged terrain on the Camino Real Ranger District. Developed winter and summer resort management area is enlarged by 921 acres to allow for possible future expansion of the Sipapu Ski Area. Any such expansion would be analyzed under a separate decision, and subject to all relevant laws and other plan direction.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 was developed to respond to requests to do less restoration through mechanical means and instead use natural processes as a management tool. This alternative also addresses public comments from those who want greater protections for water resources (specifically key wetlands), wildlife movement (specifically big game migration routes), and areas supporting Rio Grande cutthroat trout, and less motorized use. This alternative also addresses public comments from those who want more wilderness on the Carson National Forest.

Alternative 4 emphasizes the use of fire for restoration and decreases the use of mechanical treatments as a restoration tool. This alternative stresses road decommissioning and obliteration of Forest Service system and non-system roads, as well as temporary roads. To respond to requests for more wilderness and primitive non-motorized areas on the forest, alternative 4 proposes roughly 48,897 acres of recommended wilderness. This would reduce areas suitable for timber production and motorized and mechanized use. Overall, alternative 4 would decrease motorized use, both winter over-snow and motor vehicle use. Like alternative 2, Valle Vidal is identified as a management area (VVMA) in this alternative, but with added protections, including no timber harvesting. This alternative would also expand the San Antonio Management Area (SAMA) proposed in alternative 2, to include Cebolla Mesa on the east side of the Rio Grande Gorge. San Antonio Management Area includes objectives for wildlife connectivity, standards for

seasonal road closures, and restrictions in the management of vegetation. Alternative 4 adds the Wetland Jewels management area (WJMA), to recognize 10 areas on the forest that are significant wetlands and need added protections. Wetland Jewels management area includes objectives that prioritize work around wetlands and prohibits new roads, military ground operations, new utility infrastructure, or the establishment of new mineral rights. The Rio Grande cutthroat trout management area (RGCTMA) is added under this alternative to identify areas on the Carson National Forest where restoration of Rio Grande cutthroat trout habitat should be emphasized.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 was developed to respond to requests that all of the areas evaluated to have wilderness characteristics on the Carson National Forest need to be recommended for wilderness.

Alternative 5 emphasizes wilderness opportunities of solitude, apparent naturalness, and non-motorized or mechanized recreation in a primitive setting. Since not all of the evaluated areas fit into the other alternative themes, this alternative responds to the request that at least one alternative analyze 100 percent of the areas with wilderness characteristics. Alternative 5 also includes all of the forestwide plan components, designated areas, and management areas identified in alternative 2, but proposes as recommended wilderness all 13 areas (67,996 acres) identified as having wilderness characteristics.

Differences Among the Revised Plan Alternatives

This section lists only those plan components in alternatives 3, 4 and 5 that would differ from alternative 2, the draft proposed plan.

Forestwide Plan Components

Ecological Sustainability and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

Mixed Conifer with Frequent Fire (VEG-MCD)

Mixed Conifer with Frequent Fire Objectives (FW-VEG-MCD-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: Mechanically treat at least 5,500–10,000 acres, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 3: Mechanically treat at least 15,000–30,000 acres, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 4: [Objective is removed]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Objective 2

Alternative 2: During each 10-year period following plan approval, treat at least 20,000–40,000 acres using a combination of prescribed fire and naturally ignited wildfire to make progress toward or to maintain desired conditions.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: During each 10-year period following plan approval, treat at least 25,000–50,000 acres using a combination of prescribed fire and naturally ignited wildfire to make progress toward or to maintain desired conditions.

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Ponderosa Pine Forest (VEG-PPF)

Ponderosa Pine Forest Objectives (FW-VEG-PPF-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: Mechanically treat at least 22,000–50,000 acres, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 3: Mechanically treat at least 50,000–100,000 acres, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 4: [Objective is removed]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Objective 2

Alternative 2: During the 10 years following plan approval, treat at least 80,000–125,000 acres using a combination of prescribed fire and naturally ignited wildfire to make progress toward or maintain desired conditions.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: During the 10 years following plan approval, treat at least 100,000–175,000 acres using a combination of prescribed fire and naturally ignited wildfire to make progress toward or maintain desired conditions.

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Riparian Management Zones (WSW-RMZ)

Riparian Management Zone Objectives (FW-WSW-RMZ-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: Restore structure and function of at least 200–300 acres of nonfunctioning and functioning-at-risk riparian areas annually. Treatments align with priority watersheds.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: [Objective is moved to MA-WJMA-O in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Streams (WSW-RMZ-STM)

Stream Desired Conditions (FW-WSW-RMZ-STM-DC)

Desired Condition 2

Alternative 2: Stream ecosystems, including ephemeral watercourses are not fragmented by infrastructure or development, except when the fragmentation serves to protect native aquatic species from nonnative aquatic species. Streams provide connectivity important for dispersal, access to new habitats, perpetuation of genetic diversity, as well as nesting and foraging for at-risk species.

Alternative 3: [Desired condition is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: Stream ecosystems, including ephemeral watercourses are not fragmented by infrastructure or development. Streams provide connectivity important for dispersal, access to new habitats, perpetuation of genetic diversity, as well as nesting and foraging for at-risk species.

Alternative 5: [Desired condition is the same as alternative 2]

Springs and Seeps Standards (FW-WSW-RMZ-SNS)

Springs and Seeps Standards (FW-WSW-RMZ-SNS-S)

Standard 2

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [No such standard]

Alternative 4: No new spring development shall be allowed.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Wildlife, Fish, and Plants (WFP)

Wildlife, Fish, and Plant Objectives (FW-WFP-O)

Objective 3

Alternative 2: Reduce nonnative fish within native fish populations in 4 to 6 stream reaches, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: [Moved to MA-RGCTMA-O in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Objective 4

Alternative 2: Improve wildlife or aquatic habitat connectivity by removing unneeded structures (e.g., fences, roads, cattleguards, culverts, and spring developments) or completing improvement projects (e.g., removing barriers and connecting fragmented habitat) in at least 10 to 20 locations, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: [Moved to MA-SAMA-O in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Objective 5

Alternative 2: Complete at least five projects to improve habitat connectivity for aquatic and riparian species (e.g., remove barriers, restore dewatered stream segments, connect fragmented habitat, wildlife passage friendly fences, etc.), during the 10 years following plan approval.

Alternative 3: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: [Moved to MA-SAMA-O in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Objective is the same as alternative 2]

Social, Cultural, and Economic Sustainability and Multiple Use

Sustainable Rangelands and Livestock Grazing (GRZ)

Livestock Grazing Standards (FW-GRZ-S)

Standard 4

Alternative 2: Domestic sheep allotments shall be managed (e.g., fencing, increased herding, herding dogs, potential vaccine, or other scientifically supported strategies) to mitigate the potential transfer of disease from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep, wherever bighorn sheep occur.

Alternative 3: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: Domestic sheep grazing allotments shall not be authorized within bighorn sheep occupied habitat to mitigate the potential transfer of disease from domestic sheep to bighorn sheep.

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Sustainable Forestry and Forest Products (FFP)

Timber Suitability – Alternative 2

Table 1. Timber production suitability classification for the Carson National Forest (alternative 2)

Land Classification Category	Area (acres)
A. Total National Forest System lands in the plan area	1,486,353
B. Lands not suitable for timber production due to legal or technical reasons	1,021,003
C. Lands that may be suitable for timber production (A–B)	465,350
D. Total lands suitable for timber production because timber production is compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan	455,844
E. Lands not suitable for timber production because timber production is not compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan (C–D)	9,506
F. Total lands not suitable for timber production (B+E)	1,030,509

Timber Suitability – Alternative 3

Table 2. Timber production suitability classification for the Carson National Forest (alternative 3)

Land Classification Category	Area (acres)
A. Total National Forest System lands in the plan area	1,486,353
B. Lands not suitable for timber production due to legal or technical reasons	1,021,003
C. Lands that may be suitable for timber production (A–B)	465,350
D. Total lands suitable for timber production because timber production is compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan	458,724
E. Lands not suitable for timber production because timber production is not compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan (C–D)	6,626
F. Total lands not suitable for timber production (B+E)	1,027,629

Timber Suitability – Alternative 4

Table 3. Timber production suitability classification for the Carson National Forest (alternative 4)

Land Classification Category	Area (acres)
A. Total National Forest System lands in the plan area	1,486,353
B. Lands not suitable for timber production due to legal or technical reasons	1,021,003
C. Lands that may be suitable for timber production (A–B)	465,350
D. Total lands suitable for timber production because timber production is compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan	351,970
E. Lands not suitable for timber production because timber production is not compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan (C–D)	113,380
F. Total lands not suitable for timber production (B+E)	1,134,383

Timber Suitability – Alternative 5

Table 4. Timber production suitability classification for the Carson National Forest (alternative 5)

Land Classification Category	Area (acres)
A. Total National Forest System lands in the plan area	1,486,353
B. Lands not suitable for timber production due to legal or technical reasons	1,021,003
C. Lands that may be suitable for timber production (A–B)	465,350
D. Total lands suitable for timber production because timber production is compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan	440,550
E. Lands not suitable for timber production because timber production is not compatible with the desired conditions and objectives established by the plan (C–D)	24,800
F. Total lands not suitable for timber production (B+E)	1,045,803

Projected Harvest Levels – Alternative 2

Table 5. Projected timber and wood product harvest levels on lands suitable and not suitable for timber production in alternative 2

Timber And Wood Product Harvest Category	MMCF First Decade	MMBF First Decade	Tons First Decade	MMCF Second Decade	MMBF Second Decade	Tons Second Decade
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A1. Sawtimber (industrial softwoods, 9 inches or more)	12.9	60.3	192,729	13.3	64.6	196,476
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A2. Other Products (industrial softwood, 5–9 inches roundwood, commonly pulpwood, mostly in the form of fuelwood)	2.4	NA	102,519	2.1	NA	82,378
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B1. Sawtimber (9 inches+)	20.8	98.1	311,883	22.9	113.2	33,8618
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B2. Other Products (5–9 inches)	4.1	NA	13,6559	3.6	NA	11,2010
C. Projected Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ) (A1+A2+B1+B2)	40.1	158.5	743,689	41.9	177.8	729,482
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D1. Non-industrial softwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	5.9	1.6	6.5	1.8	5.9	1.6
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D2. Hardwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.4	1.1	0.4
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D3. Aspen (5 inches+)	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.2
E. Projected Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ) (C+D1+D2+D3)	47.8	743,692	50.0	729,484	47.8	743,692

1. Volumes other than salvage or sanitation that meet timber product utilization standards

2. Fuelwood, biomass, and other volumes that do not meet timber product utilization standards.

MMCF = million cubic feet; MMBF = million board feet; NA = not applicable.

Projected Harvest Levels – Alternative 3

Table 6. Projected timber and wood product harvest levels on lands suitable and not suitable for timber production in alternative 3

Timber And Wood Product Harvest Category	MMCF First Decade	MMBF First Decade	Tons First Decade	MMCF Second Decade	MMBF Second Decade	Tons Second Decade
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A1. Sawtimber (industrial softwoods, 9 inches or more)	36.4	170.7	544,950	24.2	115.6	358,854
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A2. Other Products (industrial softwood, 5–9 inches roundwood, commonly pulpwood, mostly in the form of fuelwood)	6.3	NA	162,194	3.8	NA	108,995
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B1. Sawtimber (9 inches+)	51.4	247.0	769,052	28.3	139.0	417,979
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B2. Other Products (5–9 inches)	9.2	NA	210,073	5.0	NA	132,262
C. Projected Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ) (A1+A2+B1+B2)	103.4	417.7	1,686,271	61.2	254.7	1,018,092
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D1. Non-industrial softwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	7.7	NA	2.1	7.0	NA	1.9
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D2. Hardwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	3.4	NA	1.3	1.6	NA	0.6
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D3. Aspen (5 inches+)	3.0	NA	0.7	2.1	NA	0.5
E. Projected Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ) (C+D1+D2+D3)	117.6	NA	1,686,275	72.0	NA	1,018,095

1. Volumes other than salvage or sanitation that meet timber product utilization standards

2. Fuelwood, biomass, and other volumes that do not meet timber product utilization standards.

MMCF = million cubic feet; MMBF = million board feet; NA = not applicable.

Projected Harvest Levels – Alternative 4

Table 7. Projected timber and wood product harvest levels on lands suitable and not suitable for timber production in alternative 4

Timber And Wood Product Harvest Category	MMCF First Decade	MMBF First Decade	Tons First Decade	MMCF Second Decade	MMBF Second Decade	Tons Second Decade
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A1. Sawtimber (industrial softwoods, 9 inches or more)	1.6	7.2	24,545	1.8	8.4	26,412
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A2. Other Products (industrial softwood, 5–9 inches roundwood, commonly pulpwood, mostly in the form of fuelwood)	0.4	NA	57,155	0.3	NA	44,116
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B1. Sawtimber (9 inches+)	2.4	10.8	36,388	2.2	10.2	33,229
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B2. Other Products (5–9 inches)	0.8	NA	106,493	0.7	NA	83,230
C. Projected Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ) (A1+A2+B1+B2)	5.2	18.0	224,582	5.0	18.5	186,988
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D1. Non-industrial softwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	1.8	NA	0.5	2.3	NA	0.6
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D2. Hardwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	0.3	NA	0.1	0.2	NA	0.1
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D3. Aspen (5 inches+)	0.4	NA	0.1	0.2	NA	0.1
E. Projected Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ) (C+D1+D2+D3)	7.6	NA	224,583	7.8	NA	186,989

1. Volumes other than salvage or sanitation that meet timber product utilization standards.

2. Fuelwood, biomass, and other volumes that do not meet timber product utilization standards.

MMCF = million cubic feet; MMBF = million board feet; NA = not applicable.

Projected Harvest Levels – Alternative 5

Table 8. Projected timber and wood product harvest levels on lands suitable and not suitable for timber production in alternative 5

Timber And Wood Product Harvest Category	MMCF First Decade	MMBF First Decade	Tons First Decade	MMCF Second Decade	MMBF Second Decade	Tons Second Decade
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A1. Sawtimber (industrial softwoods, 9 inches or more)	12.6	59.0	188,639	13.0	63.3	192,583
Lands Suitable for Timber Production ¹ A2. Other Products (industrial softwood, 5–9 inches roundwood, commonly pulpwood, mostly in the form of fuelwood)	2.3	NA	101,333	2.0	NA	81,401
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B1. Sawtimber (9 inches+)	21.1	99.4	315,972	23.2	114.5	342,510
Lands Not Suitable for Timber Production ¹ B2. Other Products (5–9 inches)	4.1	NA	137,744	3.7	NA	112,986
C. Projected Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ) (A1+A2+B1+B2)	40.1	158.5	743,689	41.9	177.8	729,482
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D1. Non-industrial softwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	5.9	NA	1.6	6.5	NA	1.8
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D2. Hardwood fuelwood (5 inches+)	1.1	NA	0.4	1.0	NA	0.4
Other Estimated Wood Products ² D3. Aspen (5 inches+)	0.7	NA	0.2	0.6	NA	0.1
E. Projected Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ) (C+D1+D2+D3)	47.8	NA	743,692	50.0	NA	729,484

1. Volumes other than salvage or sanitation that meet timber product utilization standards.

2. Fuelwood, biomass, and other volumes that do not meet timber product utilization standards.

MMCF = million cubic feet; MMBF = million board feet; NA = not applicable.

Recreation (REC)

Recreation Objectives (FW-REC-O)

Objective 7

<p>Alternative 2: [No such objective]</p> <p>Alternative 3: Convert 25 percent of existing campsites in 5 developed campgrounds from single use sites (i.e., one family) to multiple use sites (e.g., group, RV, and horse riders) during the 10 years following plan approval.</p> <p>Alternative 4: [No such objective]</p> <p>Alternative 5: [No such objective]</p>

Objective 8

Alternative 2: [No such objective]

Alternative 3: Redesign existing trails or construct new trails to create 1 trail system for mountain bikes, during the 5 years following plan approval.

Alternative 4: [No such objective]

Alternative 5: [No such objective]

Transportation and Forest Access (TFA)

Transportation and Forest Access Objectives (FW-TFA-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: Obliterate or naturalize at least 20 miles of unneeded roads within the 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 3: [Objective is removed]

Alternative 4: Obliterate or naturalize at least 40 miles of unneeded roads within the 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Objective 2

Alternative 2: Grade surfaces and clean culverts and ditches on at least 500 miles of open National Forest System roads annually.

Alternative 3: Grade surfaces and clean culverts and ditches on at least 650 miles of open National Forest System roads annually.

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Objective 3

Alternative 2: Maintain at least 100–300 miles of trails (including motorized) annually.

Alternative 3: Maintain at least 200–400 miles of trails (including motorized) annually.

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Transportation and Forest Access Management Standards (FW-TFA-S)

Standard 3

Alternative 2: Temporary roads that support ecosystem restoration activities, fuels management, or other short-term projects shall be decommissioned upon project completion, to protect watershed condition, minimize wildlife disturbance, and prevent illegal motorized use.

Alternative 3: [Guideline modified and moved to FW-TFA-G in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Temporary roads that support ecosystem restoration activities, fuels management, or other short-term projects shall be obliterated or naturalized upon project completion, to protect watershed condition, minimize wildlife disturbance, and prevent illegal motorized use.

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Standard 4

Alternative 2: [Standard moved to FW-TFA-G in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Standard moved to FW-TFA-G in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Construction of new system roads shall be accompanied by a mitigating action (e.g., decommissioning) of other unneeded roads and trails to offset any resource damage resulting from construction.

Alternative 5: [Standard moved to FW-TFA-G in this alternative]

Transportation and Forest Access Management Guidelines (FW-TFA-G)

Guideline 2

Alternative 2: Construction of new system roads should be accompanied by a mitigating action (e.g., decommissioning) of other unneeded roads and trails to offset any resource damage resulting from their construction.

Alternative 3: [Removed from this alternative]

Alternative 4: [Guideline moved to FW-TFA-S in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Guideline 11

Alternative 2: [Guideline modified and moved to FW-TFA-S in this alternative]

Alternative 3: Temporary roads that support ecosystem restoration activities, fuels management, or other short-term projects should be considered for conversion to system roads or motorized trails.

Alternative 4: [Guideline modified and moved to FW-TFA-S in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Guideline modified and moved to FW-TFA-S in this alternative]

Scenery (SCEN)

Scenery Desired Conditions (FW-SCEN-DC)

Desired Condition 5

Alternative 2: The forest appears predominantly natural and human activities do not dominate the landscape.

Alternative 3: Areas of the forest appear natural where human activities do not dominate the landscape.

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Wildland Fire Management (FIRE)

Wildland Fire Management Guidelines (FW-FIRE-G)

Guideline 1

Alternative 2: To restore fire on the landscape, naturally ignited fires (including those occurring in designated areas) should be managed to meet multiple resource objectives when fire weather conditions facilitate progress toward desired conditions (per Desired Conditions of various resources throughout the plan).

Alternative 3: To restore fire on the landscape, naturally ignited fires (including those occurring in designated areas) should be managed to meet multiple resource objectives when fire weather conditions facilitate progress toward desired conditions (per Desired Conditions of various resources throughout the plan), but should be suppressed in suitable timber or when they would impact trail access.

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Plan Components for Designated Areas and Management Areas

Designated areas are mostly designated by statute, but some categories may be established administratively through the Federal executive branch. Plan components for a designated area may differ from forest-wide guidance and must provide for appropriate management of the designated area, based on the applicable authorities and the specific purposes for which the area was designated or recommended for designation.

Management areas are used to describe how plan components apply to specific parcels of National Forest System land. A management area represents a management emphasis for an area or several similar areas on the landscape.

Forest-wide plan components are applied, unless there is management direction for a designated area or management area. Where designated areas, management areas, and forest-wide plan components overlap, designated area plan direction supersedes management area direction, which supersedes forest-wide direction. Where overlapping direction is not incompatible all direction applies. For example, where designated wilderness overlaps a management area the wilderness area direction must be followed even if

it contradicts the management area direction. Where a developed resort management area overlaps forest-wide vegetation community direction the developed resort direction applies even if it contradicts the forest-wide direction. Where management areas overlap, plan direction for both must be followed.

Plan components for designated and management areas may differ from forest-wide guidance by:

1. Constraining an activity where forest-wide direction does not;
2. Constraining an activity to a greater degree than forest-wide direction; or
3. Providing for an exception to forest-wide direction, when forest-wide direction is in conflict with the management emphasis of the management area. For example, a forest-wide desired condition in Spruce-Fir Forest describes openings to be maintained by natural processes, while a desired condition for the Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area describes resort activities playing a dominant role in maintaining created grassy openings intermixed with forested areas.

Management Areas

Recommended Wilderness Management Area (RWMA)

Alternative 2: 9,189 acres of recommended wilderness.

Alternative 3: [Does not include any Recommended Wilderness Management Areas and so does not have any components for recommended wilderness]

Alternative 4: 45,473 acres of recommended wilderness

Alternative 5: 67,996 acres of recommended wilderness

Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area (DEVRES)

Alternative 2: 2,588 acres

Alternative 3: 3,509 acres

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area Standards (FW-DEVRES-S)

Standard 1

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: A road shall not be constructed or reconstructed in an inventoried roadless area, unless the responsible official determines that a road is needed according to the circumstances allowed in the 2001 Roadless Rule (66 FR 3244). Review authorities shall be followed.

Alternative 4: [No such standard]

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 2

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: Timber shall not be cut, sold, or removed in inventoried roadless areas, unless the responsible official determines that activities meet the circumstances provided in the Roadless Rule (66 FR 3244). Review authorities shall be followed.

Alternative 4: [No such standard]

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area Guidelines (FW-DEVRES-G)

Guideline 4

Alternative 2: [No such guideline]

Alternative 3: Inventoried roadless areas should be managed for Primitive, Semi-primitive Non-motorized, and Semi-primitive Motorized recreation settings, to preserve their roadless area characteristics.

Alternative 4: [No such guideline]

Alternative 5: [No such guideline]

Guideline 5

Alternative 2: [No such guideline]

Alternative 3: In inventoried roadless areas management activities should be consistent with the scenic integrity objective of High, to preserve their roadless area characteristics.

Alternative 4: [No such guideline]

Alternative 5: [No such guideline]

Grassland Maintenance Management Area (GMMA)

Alternative 2: 61,824 acres

Alternative 3: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 4: [Does not include any Grassland Maintenance Management Area]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Valle Vidal Management Area (VVMA)

Alternative 2: 100,000 acres

Alternative 3: [Does not include the Valle Vidal Management Area]

Alternative 4: [Same as alternative 2]

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

Valle Vidal Management Area Standards (MA-VVMA-S)

Standard 21

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [Valle Vidal Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Timber harvest for the purpose of timber production is prohibited.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 22

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [Valle Vidal Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Military ground operations are prohibited.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 23

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [Valle Vidal Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Construction of motorized trails is prohibited.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

San Antonio Management Area (SAMA)

Alternative 2: 117,035 acres

Alternative 3: [Does not include the San Antonio Management Area]

Alternative 4: 148,000 acres

Alternative 5: [Same as alternative 2]

San Antonio Management Area Objectives (MA-SAMA-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: [No such objective]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Improve wildlife or aquatic habitat connectivity by removing unneeded structures (e.g., fences, roads, cattleguards, and culverts) or completing improvement projects (e.g., removing barriers and connecting fragmented habitat) in at least 10 to 20 locations, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 5: [No such objective]

Objective 2

Alternative 2: [No such objective]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Complete at least five projects to improve habitat connectivity for aquatic and riparian species (e.g., remove barriers, restore dewatered stream segments, connect fragmented habitat, wildlife passage friendly fences, etc.), during the 10 years following plan approval.

Alternative 5: [No such objective]

San Antonio Management Area Standards (MA-SAMA-S)

Standard 8

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Except for travel on open public roads, all public entry (including hiking) is prohibited on the Tres Piedras Ranger District portion of this management area from January 1 to March 30 and May 1 to June 30, to provide security for elk winter range and calving.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 9

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Except for travel on open public roads and Cebolla Mesa Trail, all public entry (including hiking) is prohibited on the Questa Ranger District portion of this management area from January 1 to March 30, to provide security for elk winter range.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 10

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Timber harvest for the purpose of timber production is prohibited.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

Standard 11

Alternative 2: [No such standard]

Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Military ground operations are prohibited.

Alternative 5: [No such standard]

San Antonio Management Area Guidelines (MA-SAMA-G)

Guideline 2

<p>Alternative 2: [No such guideline]</p> <p>Alternative 3: [San Antonio Management Area not included in this alternative]</p> <p>Alternative 4: Vegetation management activities should not impact more than 3 percent of the management area in any one year period.</p> <p>Alternative 5: [No such standard]</p>

Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area (OHVMA)

This area has the unique and specific characteristics required for trials motorcycle riding including rugged terrain, rocks and obstacles, as opposed to trails or roads. Intensive off-highway vehicle use in an undeveloped setting provides a range of challenges and opportunities not found on other parts of the Carson National Forest. This area provides a unique and valuable recreational resource to the trials motorcycle community, and allows for frequent, casual use for practice and skills development without having to rely on infrequent, permitted events.

Alternative 2: [Does not include the Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area]

Alternative 3: 2,978 acres

Alternative 4: [Does not include the Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area]

Alternative 5: [Does not include the Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area]

Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area Desired Conditions (MA-OHVMA-DC)

Desired Condition 1

<p>Alternative 2: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p> <p>Alternative 3: Challenging terrain provides opportunities for trials motorcycles and off-highway vehicle rock crawling.</p> <p>Alternative 4: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p> <p>Alternative 5: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p>

Desired Condition 2

<p>Alternative 2: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p> <p>Alternative 3: Trail and road system development is limited to preserve rugged terrain and obstacles.</p> <p>Alternative 4: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p> <p>Alternative 5: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p>

Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area Standards (MA-OHVMA-S)

Standard 1

<p>Alternative 2: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]</p>

Alternative 3: No new structural improvements are allowed except for management area boundary markers, a parking area, an information kiosk, and a restroom.

Alternative 4: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]

Standard 2

Alternative 2: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: Any trail construction must be for motorized use. Multi-purpose trails shall not be constructed.

Alternative 4: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 5: [Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area not included in this alternative]

Wetland Jewels Management Area (WJMA)

The Wetland Jewels Management Area is made up of 10 areas containing a single wetland or complex of wetlands that provide important ecological functions to the terrestrial and aquatic landscape. These wetlands and wetland complexes provide habitat for wildlife, contribute clean water to downstream communities, mitigate downstream flooding, help maintain downstream flows, and sequester carbon. The protection of ecological function is focused in these wetland areas on the forest, by making them a priority for protection and restoration. Emphasis on management activities in Wetland Jewels Management Area to maintain and restore riparian function would compensate for degraded wetland conditions in the broader landscape. Actions that degrade the structure, function, and composition of Wetland Jewels are constrained or prohibited.

Alternative 2: [Does not include the Wetland Jewels Management Area]

Alternative 3: [Does not include the Wetland Jewels Management Area]

Alternative 4: 79,630 acres

Alternative 5: [Does not include the Wetland Jewels Management Area]

Wetland Jewels Management Area Desired Conditions (MA-WJMA-DC)

Desired Condition 1

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Wetlands provide aquatic invertebrate habitat, fish habitat, waterfowl and water bird habitat, groundwater recharge capacity, streamflow maintenance capacity, surface water detention capacity, and carbon sequestration capacity, consistent with the wetland’s potential.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Desired Condition 2

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: In cases where a Wetland Jewels Management Area is smaller than a watershed, the Wetland Jewels Management Area portion of the watershed is functioning properly² in that it exhibits high geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to its potential condition.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Wetland Jewels Management Area Objectives (MA-WJMA-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Restore structure and function of at least 200–300 acres of nonfunctioning and functioning-at-risk riparian areas annually. Over ten years, distribute these restoration activities among at least six of the Wetland Jewels Management Areas.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Objective 2

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Annually install 35 to 100 erosion control treatments, to stabilize headcuts, road drainage impacts, and other erosional features.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Objective 3

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Within the 5-year period following plan approval, develop a wetland action plan for all 10 Wetland Jewels Management Areas, to address wetland stressors (e.g., recreation, wildlife and livestock grazing, road drainage) by identifying, prioritizing, and scheduling implementation of mitigation and restoration actions.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Objective 4

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Obliterate or naturalize up to 40 miles of non-system roads (e.g., unauthorized, decommissioned), within the 10-year period following plan approval.³

² According to the Watershed Condition Framework or similar current protocol.

³ If all needed obliteration and naturalization has been accomplished in the Wetland Jewels Management Area, this objective may be met through work in other areas of the forest.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Wetland Jewels Management Area Standards (MA-WJMA-S)

Standard 1

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: No new permanent roads or motorized trails shall be constructed.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Standard 2

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: No new communication or electronic equipment, pipelines, powerlines, fiber optic lines, or associated infrastructure shall be constructed.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Standard 3

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Outstanding (existing) mineral rights shall be recognized as authorized by the United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. 21-54). Any entry to access existing mineral rights will be conducted in an environmentally sound way through appropriate administration of mineral laws and regulations so as to minimize adverse environmental effects on National Forest System resources. Site-specific analysis shall occur to evaluate potential effects and develop appropriate mitigation measures. Operating plans and bonds shall be used if needed, to ensure protection and restoration of surface resources.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Standard 4

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Military ground operations are prohibited.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Wetland Jewels Management Area Guidelines (MA-WJMA-G)

Guideline 1

Alternative 2: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Consistent with wetland potential, wetland function should be maintained or improved to provide continued aquatic invertebrate habitat, fish habitat, waterfowl and water bird habitat, groundwater recharge capacity, streamflow maintenance capacity, surface water detention capacity, and carbon sequestration capacity.

Alternative 5: [Wetland Jewels Management Area not included in this alternative]

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area (RGCTMA)

The Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area is made up of three high value areas for the Rio Grande cutthroat trout: (1) north of Cruces Basin; (2) in the Comanche Creek Basin; and (3) the Rio Grande del Rancho and nearby streams. Management for the recovery of this species is a high priority in the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area.

Alternative 2: [Does not include the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area]

Alternative 3: [Does not include the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area]

Alternative 4: 145,316 acres

Alternative 5: [Does not include the Rio Grande Cutthroat Management Area]

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area Desired Conditions (MA-RGCTMA-DC)

Desired Condition 1

Alternative 2: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Ecological conditions are capable of supporting self-sustaining native aquatic species populations.

Alternative 5: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area Objectives (MA-RGCTMA-O)

Objective 1

Alternative 2: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 3: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Alternative 4: Reduce nonnative fish within native fish populations in 4 to 6 stream reaches, during each 10-year period following plan approval.

Alternative 5: [Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Management Area not included in this alternative]

Forest Plan Maps (Plan Appendix A)

There are recommended wilderness management areas in alternatives 2, 4, and 5, as shown on the following maps. Alternatives 1 and 3 do not include any recommended wilderness and are not shown.

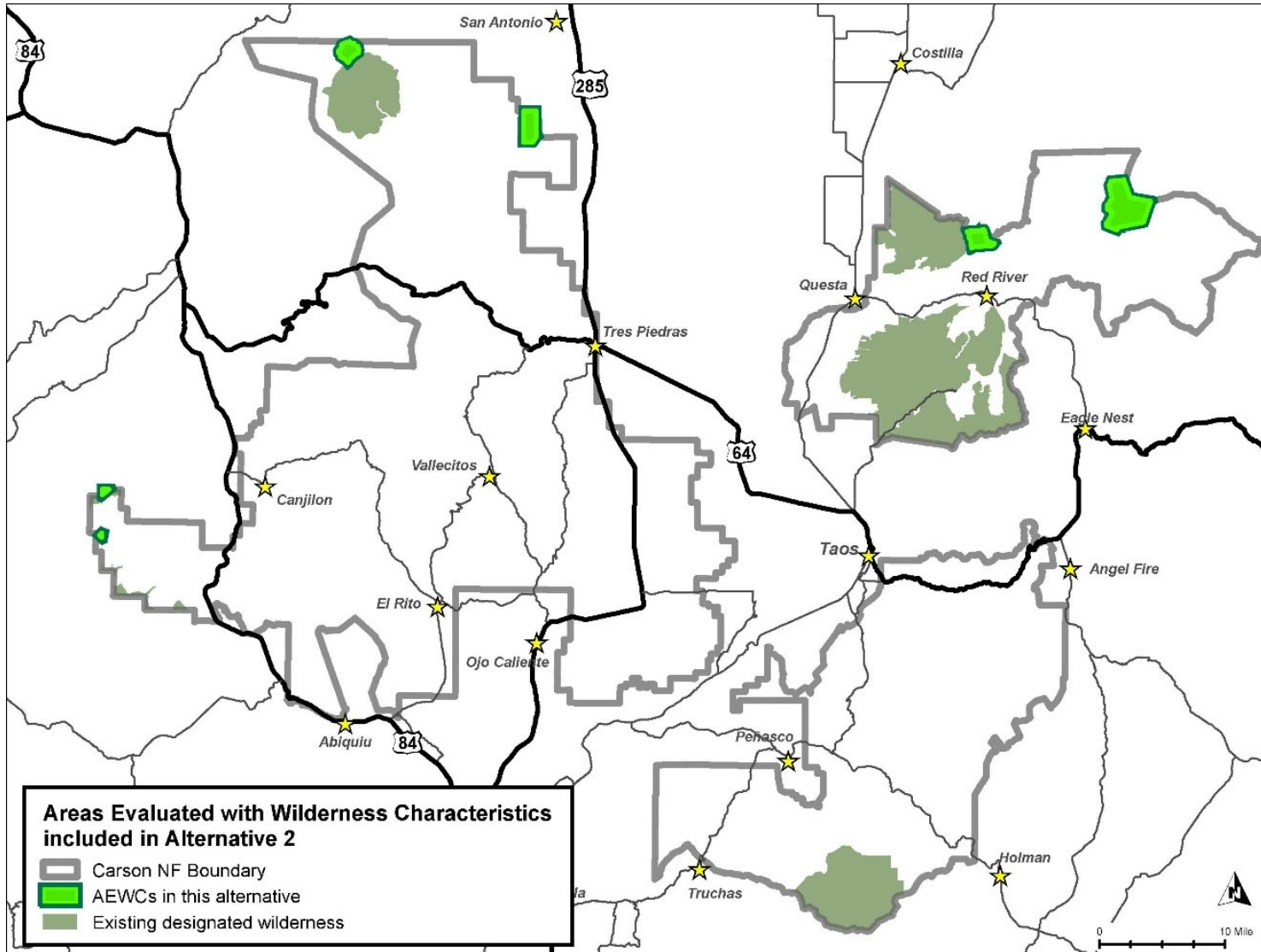
Plan components for a designated area may differ from forest-wide guidance and must provide for appropriate management of the designated area, based on the applicable authorities and the specific purposes for which the area was designated or recommended for designation.

Management areas are used to describe how plan components apply to specific parcels of National Forest System land. A management area represents a management emphasis for an area or several similar areas on the landscape.

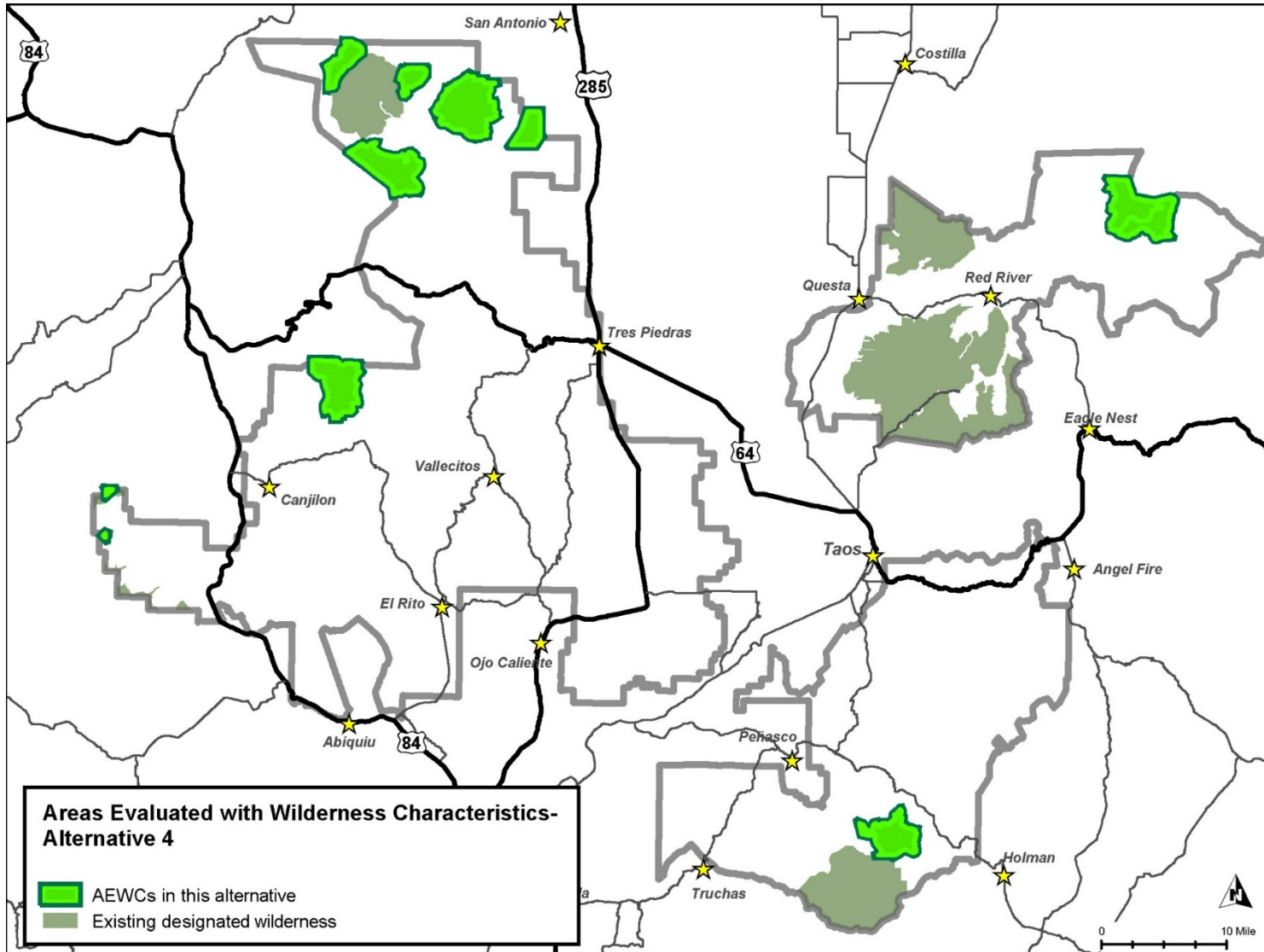
Forest-wide plan components are applied, unless there is management direction for a designated area or management area. Plan components for designated and management areas may differ from forest-wide guidance by:

1. Constraining an activity where forest-wide direction does not;
2. Constraining an activity to a greater degree than forest-wide direction; or
3. Providing for an exception to forest-wide direction, when forest-wide direction is in conflict with the management emphasis of the management area. For example, a forest-wide desired condition in Spruce-Fir Forest describes openings to be maintained by natural processes, while a desired condition for the Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area describes resort activities playing a dominant role in maintaining created grassy openings intermixed with forested areas.

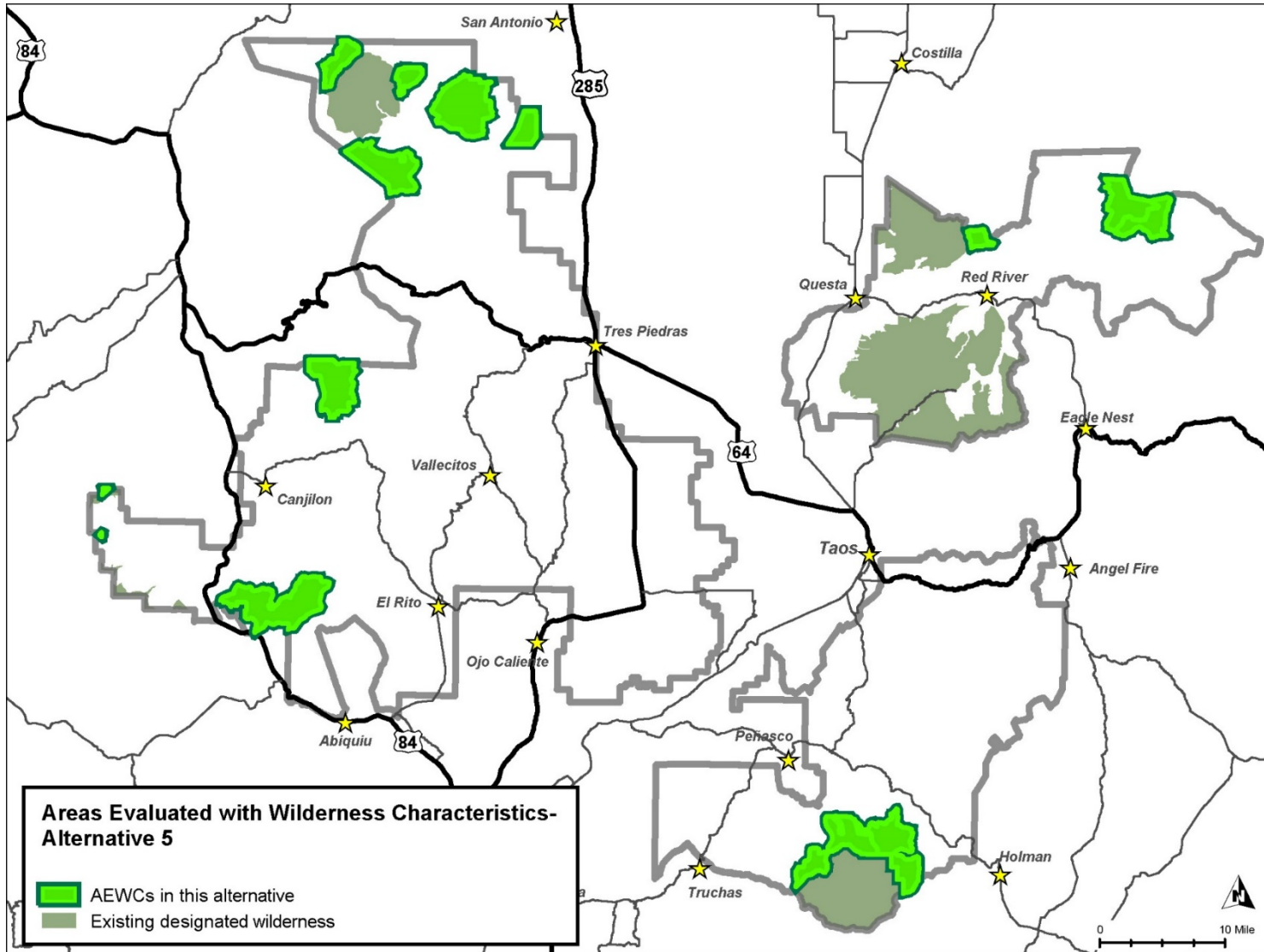
Recommended Wilderness Management Areas (RWMA) – Alternative 2



Recommended Wilderness Management Areas (RWMA) – Alternative 4



Recommended Wilderness Management Areas (RWMA) – Alternative 5



Additional Management Areas

See the plan appendix A for management areas in alternative 2. Alternative 5 management areas are the same as alternative 2 except for recommended wilderness (see above). The maps which follow are management areas specific to alternatives 3 and 4.

Plan components for a designated area may differ from forest-wide guidance and must provide for appropriate management of the designated area, based on the applicable authorities and the specific purposes for which the area was designated or recommended for designation.

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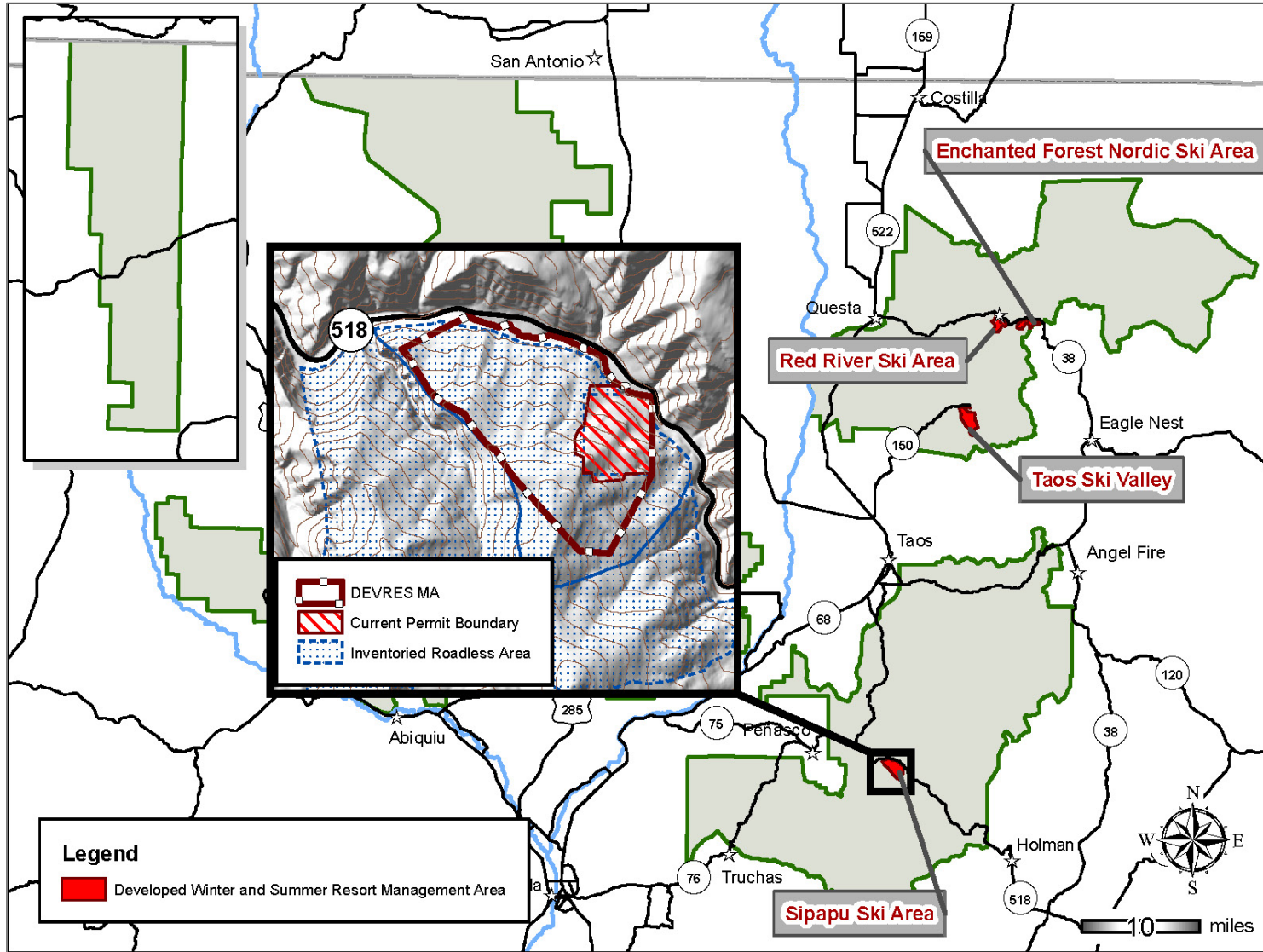
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3. Providing for an exception to forest-wide direction, when forest-wide direction is in conflict with the management emphasis of the management area. For example, a forest-wide desired condition in Spruce-Fir Forest describes openings to be maintained by natural processes, while a desired condition for the Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area describes resort activities playing a dominant role in maintaining created grassy openings intermixed with forested areas.

Off-Highway Vehicle Management Area – Alternative 3



Developed Winter and Summer Resort Management Area – Alternative 3



Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, San Antonio, and Wetland Jewels Management Areas – Alternative 4

