

**DECISION NOTICE / DESIGNATION ORDER
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF SEVEN
RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS**

**USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region
Oregon and Washington**

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Chief of the Forest Service, in Forest Service Manual Section 4063, I hereby establish the Research Natural Areas listed in Table 1 and as described in their respective Establishment Records in the section entitled "Location".

Table 1: Research Natural Area Locations

R N A	National Forest	Ranger District	County	Acres
Oregon				
Cummins/Gwynn Creeks	Siuslaw	Waldport	Lane & Lincoln	6530
Hoover Gulch	Siskiyou	Illinois Valley	Josephine	1264
Lemmingsworth Gulch	Siskiyou	Chetco	Curry	1224
Wildcat Mt.*	Willamette	McKenzie and Sweet Home	Linn	525
Washington				
Chewuch River	Okanogan	Methow Valley	Okanogan	8500
Steamboat Mt.*	Gifford Pinchot	Mt. Adams	Skamania	40
Idaho				
Little Granite**	Nez Perce	Hells Canyon NRA	Idaho	6259

*Additions to previously established RNAs

**Administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Region 6

The Regional Forester recommended the establishment of these RNAs in the Record of Decision for their respective Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans). That recommendation was the result of an analysis of the factors listed in 36 CFR 219.25 and Forest Service Manual 4063.2. Results of the Regional Forester's analysis are documented in the Forest Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statements which are available to the public.

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The Regional Forester has reexamined the RNAs to ensure that the environmental effects of establishing the areas as RNAs have not changed since the Forest Plans were adopted. In one case, Wildcat Mt., areas were recommended for addition to the proposed RNA to better accomplish the original purpose of the RNA. For the remaining RNAs no changes were found. This analysis is documented in the attached Environmental Assessment.

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment, it is my decision to adopt Alternative 2 which establishes these seven areas as Research Natural Areas. Alternative 2 is selected because it provides long-term protection of the research and educational values of these special areas and the ecosystem elements that they represent. The RNAs will be managed in compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and Forest Service Manual direction regarding RNAs and in accordance with the management direction identified in their respective Forest Plans.

Although this alternative is consistent with the management direction in each Forest Plan it does change the allocation for these areas from "Proposed RNA" to "Established RNA". This is a non-significant amendment of the Forest Plans [36 CFR 219.10(f)].

OTHER ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED

The other alternative considered was Alternative 1, the "No Action" alternative which would continue management of the RNAs as "Proposed RNAs". Alternative 1 was not selected because it would provide only short-term protection of the research and educational values of the areas. Alternative 1 is consistent with the Forest Plans.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the environmental analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment, it has been determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This determination is based on the following factors [40 CFR 1508.27]:

CONTEXT

Although this is an addition to the national system of RNAs, both short-term and long-term physical and biological effects are limited to the local area.

INTENSITY

1. There are no known effects on public health and safety.
2. No significant direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to the natural resources or other components of the human environment are anticipated.
3. Effects on the human environment are not uncertain, do not involve unique or unknown risks, and are not likely to be highly controversial.

4. There are no known effects on historical or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers. Effects of establishing the RNAs is to protect ecologically sensitive areas. No significant adverse effects area anticipated to any environmentally sensitive or critical area.

5. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

6. The proposed action will not adversely affect any federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species or Regionally listed sensitive species of plants or animals or their critical habitats.

7. The proposed action is consistent with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (USDA, USDI 1994).

8. The proposed action is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws and requirements for protection of the environment.

NOTIFICATION and IMPLEMENTATION

Legal notice of this decision will appear in The Oregonian and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer. The Forest Supervisor of each National Forest shall notify the public of this decision and mail a copy of the Decision Notice/Designation Order to all persons on their Forest Plan mailing lists.

Implementation of this decision shall not occur within seven days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in The Oregonian and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

APPEAL RIGHTS

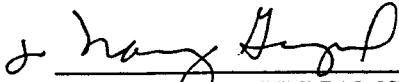
This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217. A copy of the Notice of Appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to:

Chief, USDA Forest Service
ATTN: NFS Appeals
14th and Independence Ave., S.W.
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

Any written Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal), must include the reasons for appeal, and must be submitted within 45 days from the date of legal notice of this decision in The Oregonian and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

CONTACT PERSON

For further information regarding this decision contact Sarah Greene, RNA Coordinator, Pacific Northwest Research Station, 3200 S. W. Jefferson Way, Corvallis, Oregon 97331, phone 541-750-7360.




ROBERT W. WILLIAMS
Regional Forester
Pacific Northwest Region

May 17, 1999

Date

(For) Nancy Graybeal
Deputy Regional Forester

PUBLIC NOTICES

CLASS 8
 Public Notices 8

Public Notices 8

NOTICE OF DECISION

On May 17, 1999, USDA, Forest Service, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region (Portland, Oregon) made a decision to establish 7 Research Natural Areas. RNA's are part of a national network of field ecological areas designated for research and education. They also provide gene pool preserves for plant and animal species, especially rare and endangered species. RNA's also preserve a prime example of common communities that can serve as a baseline for comparison. All seven areas were previously allocated as "proposed" RNA's during forest planning. This decision formalizes their designation for that use. The RNA's established with this decision are: CUMMINS/GWYNN CREEKS (Siuslaw NF, OR, 6530 acres); HOOVER GULCH (Siskiyou NF, OR, WA, 1244 acres); LEWMINGSWORTH GULCH (Siskiyou NF, OR, 1224 acres); WILDCAT MOUNTAIN ADDITION (Willamette NF, OR, 525 acres); CHEWUCH RIVER (Okanogan, NF, WA, 8500 acres); STEAMBOAT MOUNTAIN ADDITION (Gifford Pinchot NF, WA, 40 acres); and LITTLE GRANITE (Nez Perce NF, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, ID, 6259 acres).

A copy of the Decision Notice/Designation Order and Finding of No Significant Impact is available upon request from the Regional Office, Environmental Coordination, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon 97208.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 217. Any written Notice of Appeal must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. Any written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer, Chief Mike Dombeck, USDA - Forest Service, ATTN: NFS Appeals, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090 within 45 days of the date of this legal notice.

For further information regarding these RNAs, contact Sarah Greene, RNA Coordinator, Pacific Northwest Research Station, 3200 S.W. Jefferson Way, Corvallis, Oregon 97331, phone 541-750-7360.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Friday, May 21, 1999

PUBLIC NOTICES

380 Legal Notices

NOTICE OF DECISION

On May 17, 1999, USDA, Forest Service, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region (Portland, Oregon) made a decision to establish 7 Research Natural Areas. RNA's are part of a national network of field ecological areas designated for research and education. They also provide gene pool preserves for plant and animal species, especially rare and endangered species. RNA's also preserve a prime example of common communities that can serve as a baseline for comparison. All seven areas were previously allocated as "proposed" RNA's during forest planning. This decision formalizes their designation for that use. The RNA's established with this decision are: CUMMINS/GWYNN CREEKS (Siuslaw NF, OR, 6530 acres); HOOVER GULCH (Siskiyou NF, OR, WA, 1244 acres); LEWMINGSWORTH GULCH (Siskiyou NF, OR, 1224 acres); WILDCAT MOUNTAIN ADDITION (Willamette NF, OR, 525 acres); CHEWUCH RIVER (Okanogan, NF, WA, 8500 acres); STEAMBOAT MOUNTAIN ADDITION (Gifford Pinchot NF, WA, 40 acres); and LITTLE GRANITE (Nez Perce NF, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, ID, 6259 acres).

A copy of the Decision Notice/Designation Order and Finding of No Significant Impact is available upon request from the Regional Office, Environmental Coordination, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon 97208.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 217. Any written Notice of Appeal must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. Any written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer, Chief Mike Dombeck, USDA - Forest Service, ATTN: NFS Appeals, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090 within 45 days of the date of this legal notice.

For further information regarding these RNAs, contact Sarah Greene, RNA Coordinator, Pacific Northwest Research Station, 3200 S.W. Jefferson Way, Corvallis, Oregon 97331, phone 541-750-7360.



ESTABLISHMENT OF SEVEN RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Pacific Northwest Region
USDA Forest Service
Oregon and Washington

Lead Agency:

USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208

Responsible Official:

ROBERT W. WILLIAMS, Regional Forester
Pacific Northwest Region
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208

Prepared by:

Donna Short
Sweet Home Ranger District
Willamette National Forest
3225 Highway 20
Sweet Home, OR 97386
541-367-5158

Abstract:

This Environmental Assessment identifies the need for the proposed action, describes the analysis process and the alternatives formulated during that process. It discusses the environmental effects of each of the proposed alternatives. Two alternatives were evaluated and compared and are as follows: Alternative 1 - No Action and Alternative 2 - Finalize Establishment.



ESTABLISHMENT OF SEVEN RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

USDA FOREST SERVICE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
OREGON AND WASHINGTON

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to establish seven Research Natural Areas (RNAs) as proposed in the Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plan) of each respective National Forest. These RNAs will be managed according to the direction provided in the management plans. This proposed action, formal designation of the RNAs by the Regional Forester, will amend each National Forest's Forest Plan. Table 1 lists the RNAs that are included in this environmental assessment and Figure 1 shows their locations.

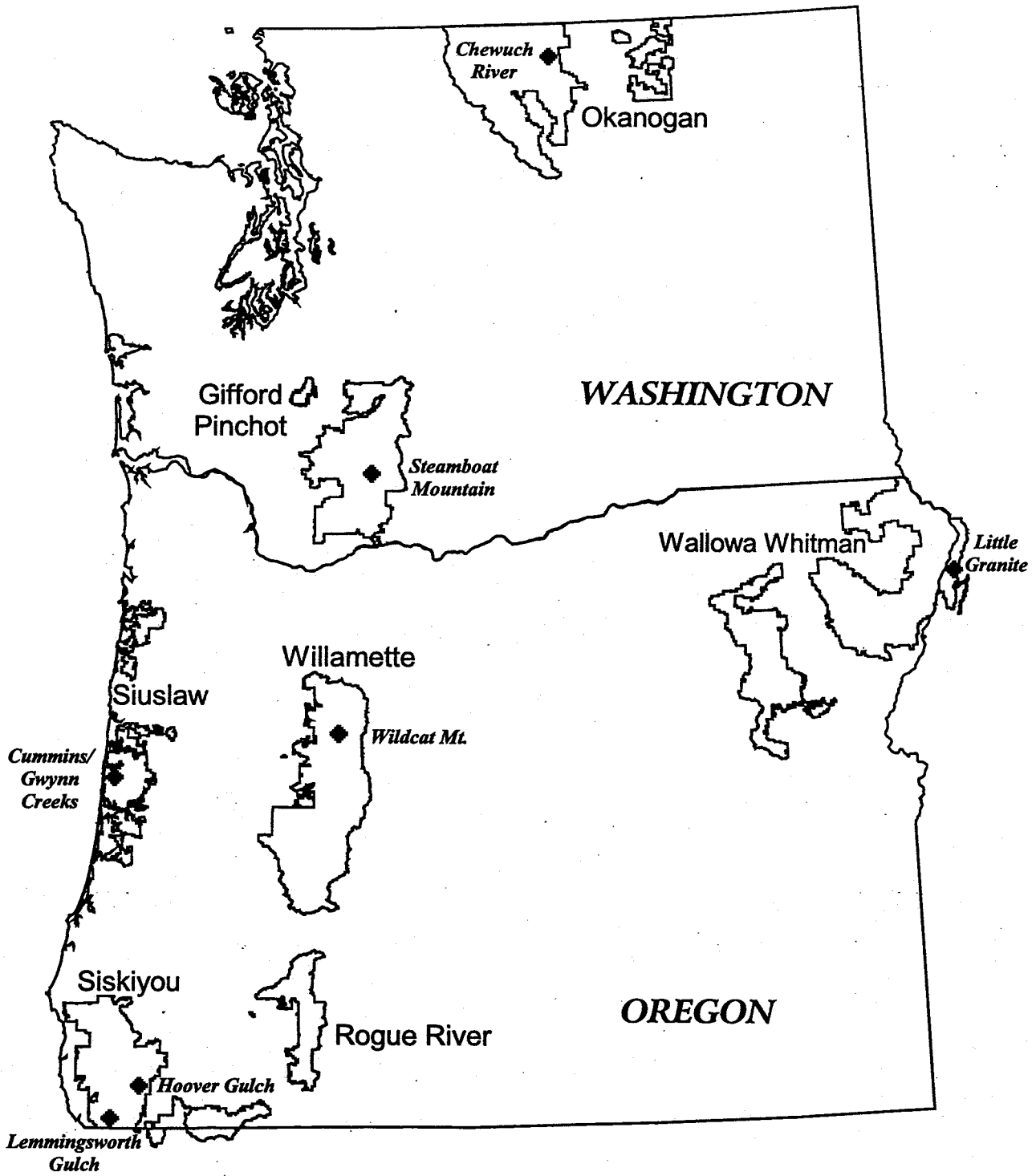
Table 1: Research Natural Area Locations

RNA	National Forest	Ranger District	County	Acres
Oregon				
Cummins/Gwynn Creeks	Siuslaw	Waldport	Lane & Lincoln	6530
Hoover Gulch	Siskiyou	Illinois Valley	Josephine	1264
Lemmingsworth Gulch	Siskiyou	Chetco	Curry	1224
Wildcat Mt.*	Willamette	McKenzie and Sweet Home	Linn	525
Washington				
Chewuch River	Okanogan	Methow Valley	Okanogan	8500
Steamboat Mt.*	Gifford Pinchot	Mt. Adams	Skamania	40
Idaho				
Little Granite**	Nez Perce	Hells Canyon NRA	Idaho	6259

*Additions to previously established RNAs

**Administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Region 6

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of establishing these RNAs is to contribute to a series of RNAs designated to “illustrate adequately or typify for research or education purposes, the important forest and range types in each forest region, as well as other plant communities that have special or unique characteristics of scientific interest and importance” (36 CFR 251.23). An evaluation by the Regional RNA Committee, pursuant to direction in Forest Service Manual 4063.04b, identified the vegetation types represented by these RNAs as suitable and desirable for inclusion in the national network. Establishment of these RNAs will provide long-term protection and recognition of these representative vegetation types (see Table 2).

Table 2: Representative Vegetative Types

RNA	Physiographic Province	Major Vegetation Types		
Chewuch River	East Slope WA Cascades	Engelmann spruce/horsetail	Mid-elevation riparian with mixed conifer, hardwoods, and marshland-bog	
Cummins/Gwynn Creeks	Oregon Coast Range	Douglas-fir/Western hemlock	Sitka spruce	Coastal aquatic systems
Hoover Gulch	Klamath Mountains	Doug-fir/canyon liveoak	Douglas-fir-tanoak-canyon live oak	
Lemmingsworth Gulch	Klamath Mountains	Port-Orford-cedar/western azalea	Douglas-fir-tanoak/salal	Douglas-fir-tanoak-canyon live oak
		Tanoak/California buckthorn on serpentine	Jeffrey pine-western white pine/manzanita-beargrass	Knobcone pine
Little Granite	Seven Devils	Subalpine fir/grouse huckleberry	Douglas-fir/ponderosa pine/snowberry	Spruce-subalpine fir/false huckleberry
		Snake River greenbush rims	Ponderosa pine/bluebunch wheat-grass	Low, mid and high elevation streams
Steamboat Mt.	East Slope WA Cascades	Pacific silver fir-mountain hemlock-Engelmann spruce		
Wildcat Mt.	West slope Oregon Cascades	Pacific silver fir/foamflower	Pacific silver fir/ vinemaple/foamflower	

A more detailed description of the vegetation, wildlife, and physical and climatic conditions can be found in the Establishment Record for each RNA. Site conditions have been reviewed since these RNAs were proposed during the land management planning process and no significant changes have occurred.

Public Involvement

Each National Forest included this project in their quarterly publication "Schedule of Proposed Actions" (FSH 1909.15, sec. 17) or sent a letter to interested parties. No comments were received from the public on continuing with the establishment process for these RNAs. The proposed RNAs were also subjected to public review and comment during the land management planning process that resulted in the Forest Plans.

Alternatives and Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1, No Action: This alternative continues management according to the direction in the each National Forest's Forest Plan for "proposed RNAs". This management generally limits recreation use to non-motorized use of existing trails and prohibits timber harvest and/or other vegetation management. There are no cumulative effects generated by this alternative. Other environmental consequences are described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for each Forest Plan. For the RNA addition with a boundary change (Wildcat Mt.) there is a possible loss of research potential in the area that was not included in this RNA addition originally.

Alternative 2, Proposed Action: This alternative will formally establish each RNA in the location described in their respective Establishment Record. The standards and guidelines listed in each respective Forest Plan will be applied to the management of these RNAs (see Table 3). Environmental consequences of this alternative have been discussed in the Final Environmental Impact Statements for each Forest Plan (Final EIS) (see Table 3). These consequences include the short-term loss of opportunities to change vegetation conditions through management. There are no significant cumulative effects from establishment of these RNAs beyond those already discussed in the Final EIS's.

The direction in the National Forest management plans for established RNAs also includes reasonably foreseeable actions such as withdrawal of the area from mineral entry. The general consequences of withdrawal are discussed in the Final EIS's. Site-specific consequences will be disclosed in more detail when the mineral entry withdrawal recommendation is implemented.

A map of each RNA follows in Figures 2 - 8. A summary of the consequences associated with a particular RNA are listed below the map for that RNA. The summary for Wildcat Mt. also discusses any additional environmental consequences not covered by the Forest Plan Final EIS for the proposed boundary changes.

Table 3: Land Management Plan References

RNA	National Forest	Standards and Guidelines in Land and Resource Management Plan	Environmental Consequences in Final EIS
Chewuch River	Okanogan NF	Chapter 4 - pages 92-93	Chapter IV - pages 69-70
Cummins/Gwynn Creeks	Siuslaw NF	Chapter IV - pages 104-107	Chapter IV - pages 77-80
Hoover Gulch	Siskiyou NF	Chapter IV - pages 81-84	Chapter IV - pages 9,20,77
Lemmingsworth Gulch	Siskiyou NF	Chapter IV - pages 81-84	Chapter IV - pages 9,20,77
Little Granite	Wallowa-Whitman NF	Chapter 4 - page 12, 83	Chapter IV - pages 7,61,72, 78,83,85
Steamboat Mt.	Gifford Pinchot	Chapter IV - page 138	Chapter IV - pages 6,43,53, 87,96,98,100,106,120,135
Wildcat Mt.	Willamette NF	Chapter IV - pages 134-137	Chapter IV - pages 166-169

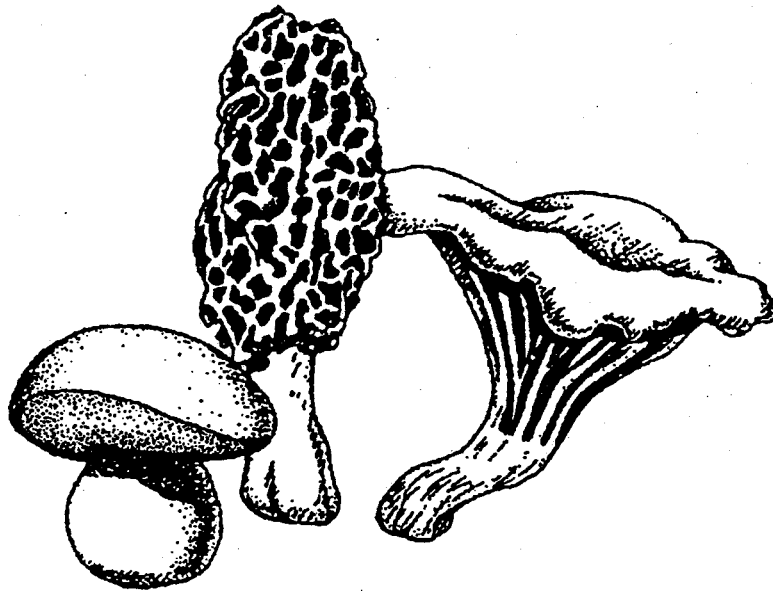
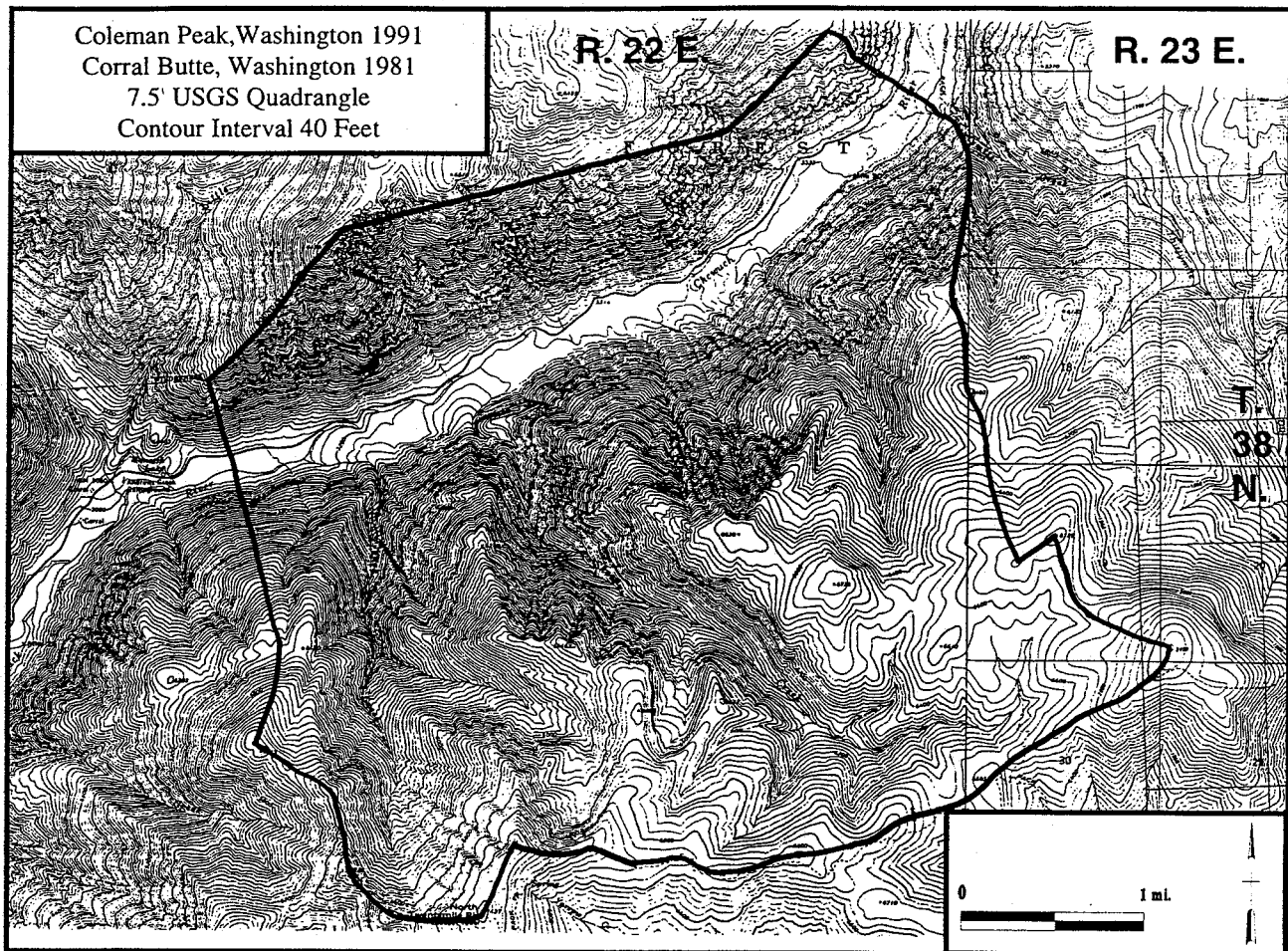


Figure 2: Chewuch River RNA



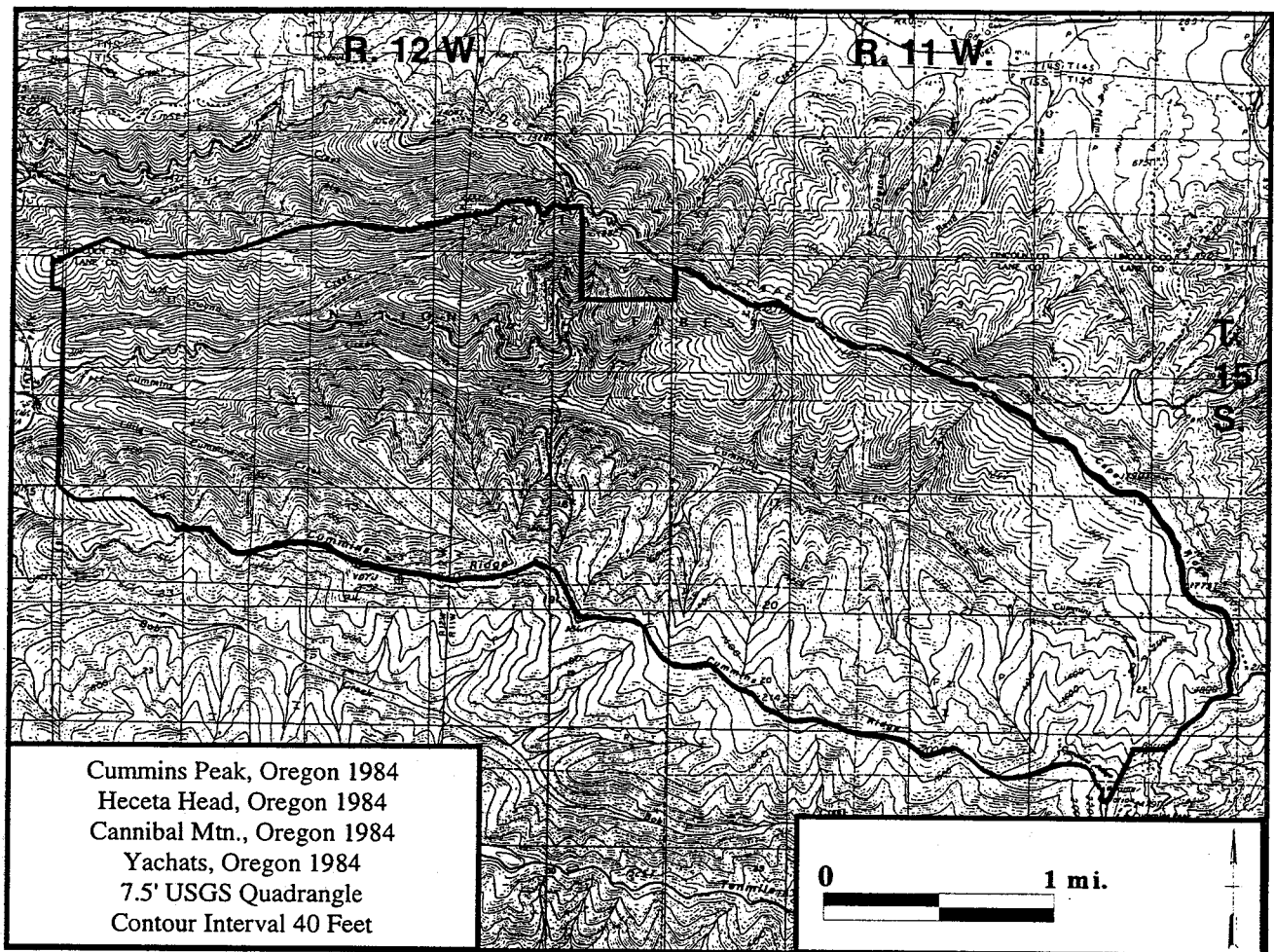
Mineral Resources: There are no known mineral resources in this RNA.

Grazing: There is currently no grazing in this RNA although there have been cattle and sheep in the area along the road in the past and there are allotments adjacent to the area.

Timber: Approximately 2400 acres are covered by lands that meet the productivity requirements for commercial timber harvest. This land was not included in the timber base for the Forest Plan, therefore establishment will have no effect on probable sale quantity.

Recreation: The RNA is adjacent to the Pasayten Wilderness. The area within and surrounding the RNA is a popular location for hiking, hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. Establishment of the RNA should not significantly impact those activities. There are a number of dispersed recreation sites along the Chewuch River Road within the RNA. This existing use will still be allowed but not encouraged.

Figure 3: Cummins/Gwynn Creeks RNA



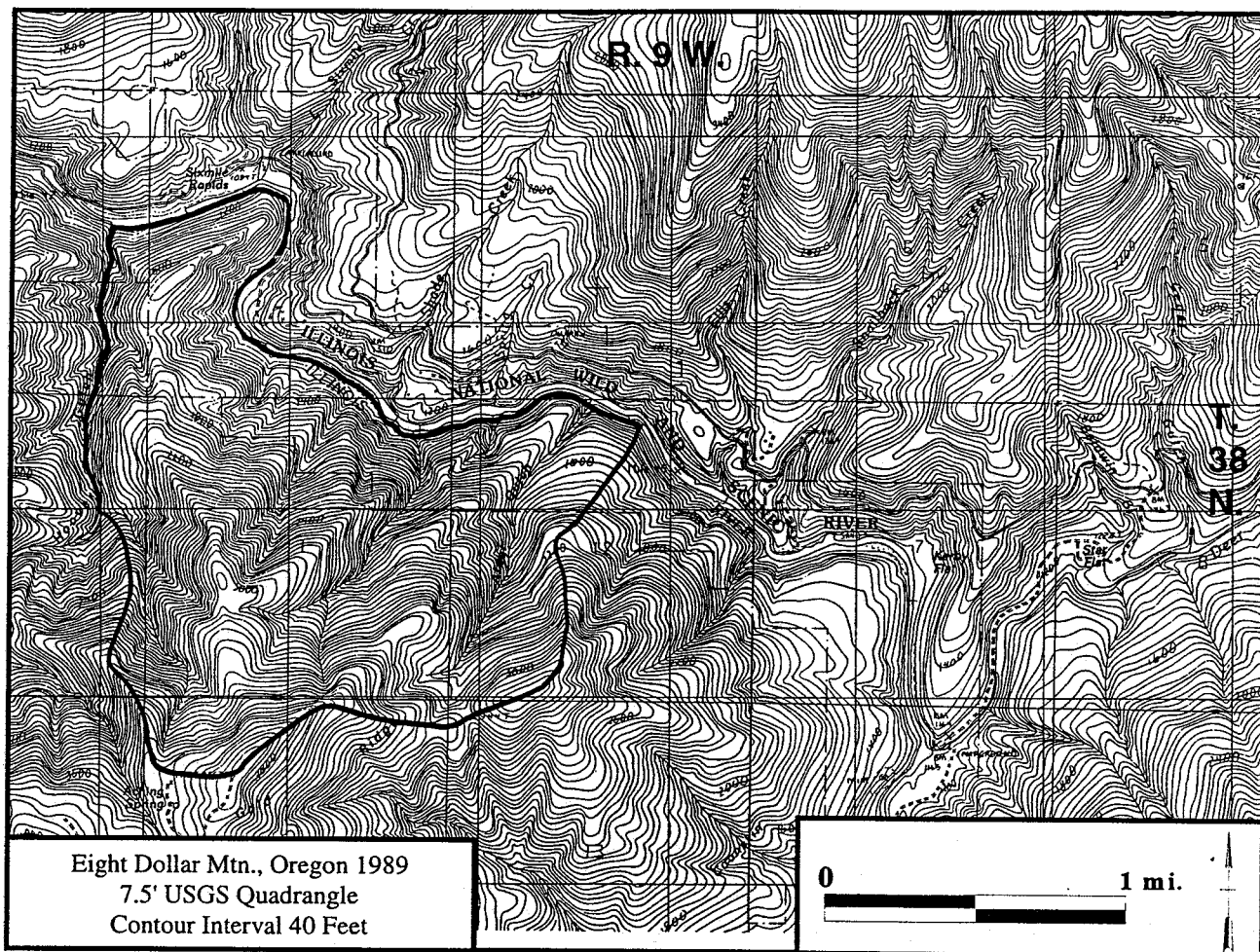
Mineral Resources: There are no known mineral resources in this RNA.

Grazing: There is no grazing in this RNA.

Timber: The entire area of the RNA is forested lands that exceed the productivity requirements for timber management. However, all most all the RNA is in the Cummins Creek Wilderness. This designation precludes timber harvest and these lands were not included in the timber base for the Forest Plan. Therefore, establishment will have no effect on probable sale quantity.

Recreation: The RNA receives some dispersed recreation such as fishing, hunting and hiking. There several trails and there are plans to build additional trails and create isolated campsites off the trails in the Wilderness. It is expected that this recreational use will increase in the future but this use is not expected to create conflicts with RNA values.

Figure 4: Hoover Gulch RNA



Mineral Resources: There are no valid mining claims in this RNA.

Grazing: There is no grazing in this RNA.

Timber: That portion of the RNA within 1/4 mile of the Illinois River, approximately 3/4 of the RNA, is in the Wild and Scenic River corridor and is not included in the allowable cut base. Only 70 acres of the remainder has forest land suitable for commercial timber harvest. This land was not included in the timber base for the Forest Plan. Therefore, establishment will have no effect on probable sale quantity.

Recreation: Most current use is immediately adjacent to the Illinois River. The RNA itself receives a little use during the summer and this use is likely to continue without affecting the research or educational values of the RNA.