

Chapter 5 – Complexes: Area-Specific Management Recommendations

This section contains our detailed, area-specific proposal utilizing the theme based approach to land management. As an organizational tool, this proposal divides the Pike-San Isabel National Forest into eleven separate **Complexes**, based on geo-physical characteristics of the land such as mountain ranges, parklands, or canyon systems. Each complex narrative provides details and justifications for our management recommendations for specific areas. In order to emphasize the larger landscape and connectivity of these lands with the ecoregion, commentary on relationships to adjacent non-Forest lands are also included.

Evaluations of ecological value across public and private lands are used throughout this chapter. The Colorado Natural Heritage Programs rates the biodiversity of Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs) as General Biodiversity, Moderate, High, Very High, and Outranking Significance. The Nature Conservancy assesses the conservation value of its Conservation Blueprint areas as Low, Moderately Low, Moderate, Moderately High and High. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project's Wildlands Network Vision recommends land use designations of Core Wilderness, Core Agency, Low and Moderate Compatible Use, and Wildlife Linkages. Detailed explanations are available from the respective organizations.

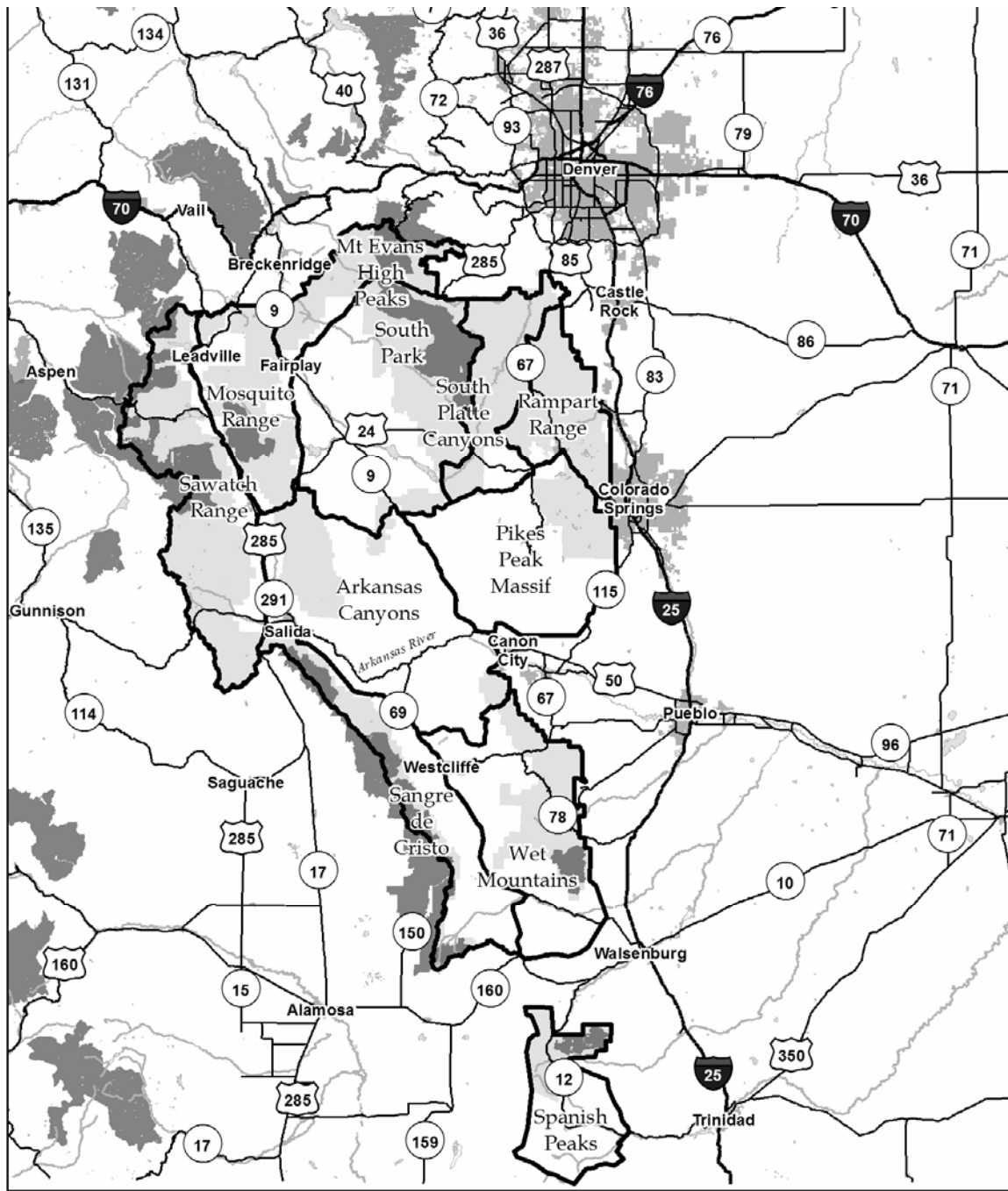
Complexes – Summary List by Watershed

Table 5.1: Summary of WCCP Complexes

Watershed	Complex	Ranger District
South Platte	Mount Evans High Peaks	South Platte & South Park
	South Park	South Platte & South Park
	South Platte Canyons	South Platte & South Park
South Platte and Arkansas	Mosquito Range	South Park, Leadville and Salida
	Pikes Peak Massif	Pikes Peak
	Rampart Range	South Platte & Pikes Peak
Arkansas	Sawatch	Leadville and Salida
	Arkansas Canyons	Salida, San Carlos & BLM Royal Gorge Resource Area
	Sangre de Cristo	Salida and San Carlos
	Wet Mountains	San Carlos
	Spanish Peaks	San Carlos

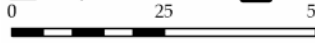
Complexes – Map Locater

Map 5.1: Wild Connections Complexes



Wild Connections Conservation Plan Geographic Complexes

- Interstate Highway
- U.S./State Highway
- City
- Pike & San Isabel National Forest
- Wilderness Area
- WCCP Complex



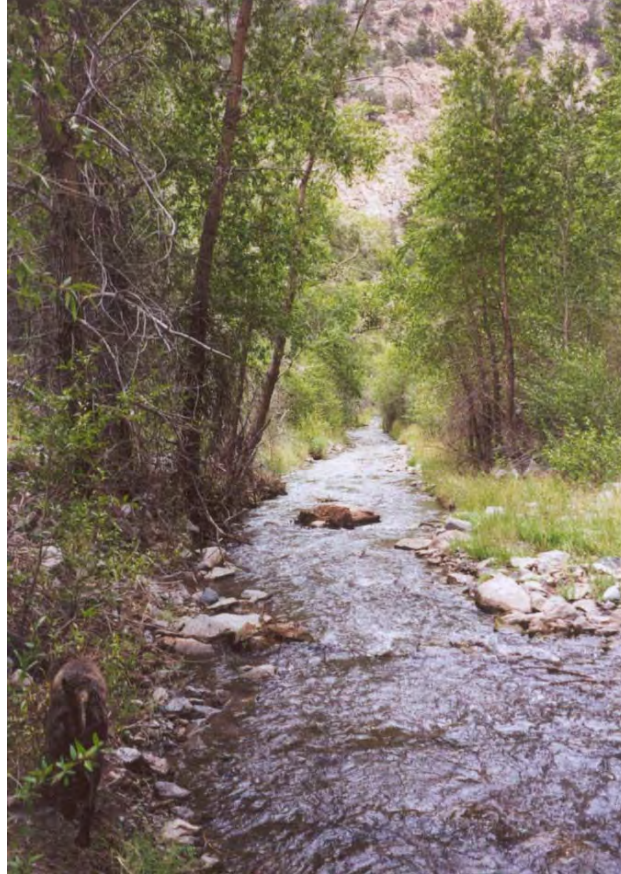
Complexes defined by the Upper Arkansas and South Platte Project as of 2006. Reference data from the Colorado Department of Transportation (roads, lakes, streams 2004).



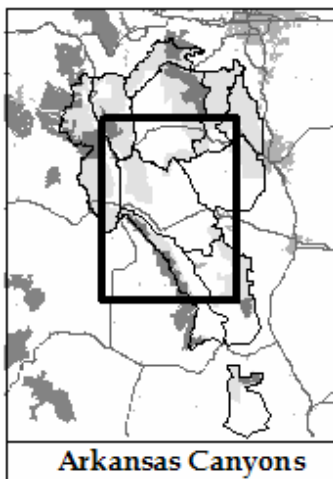
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Complex Narratives

The Arkansas Canyons Complex

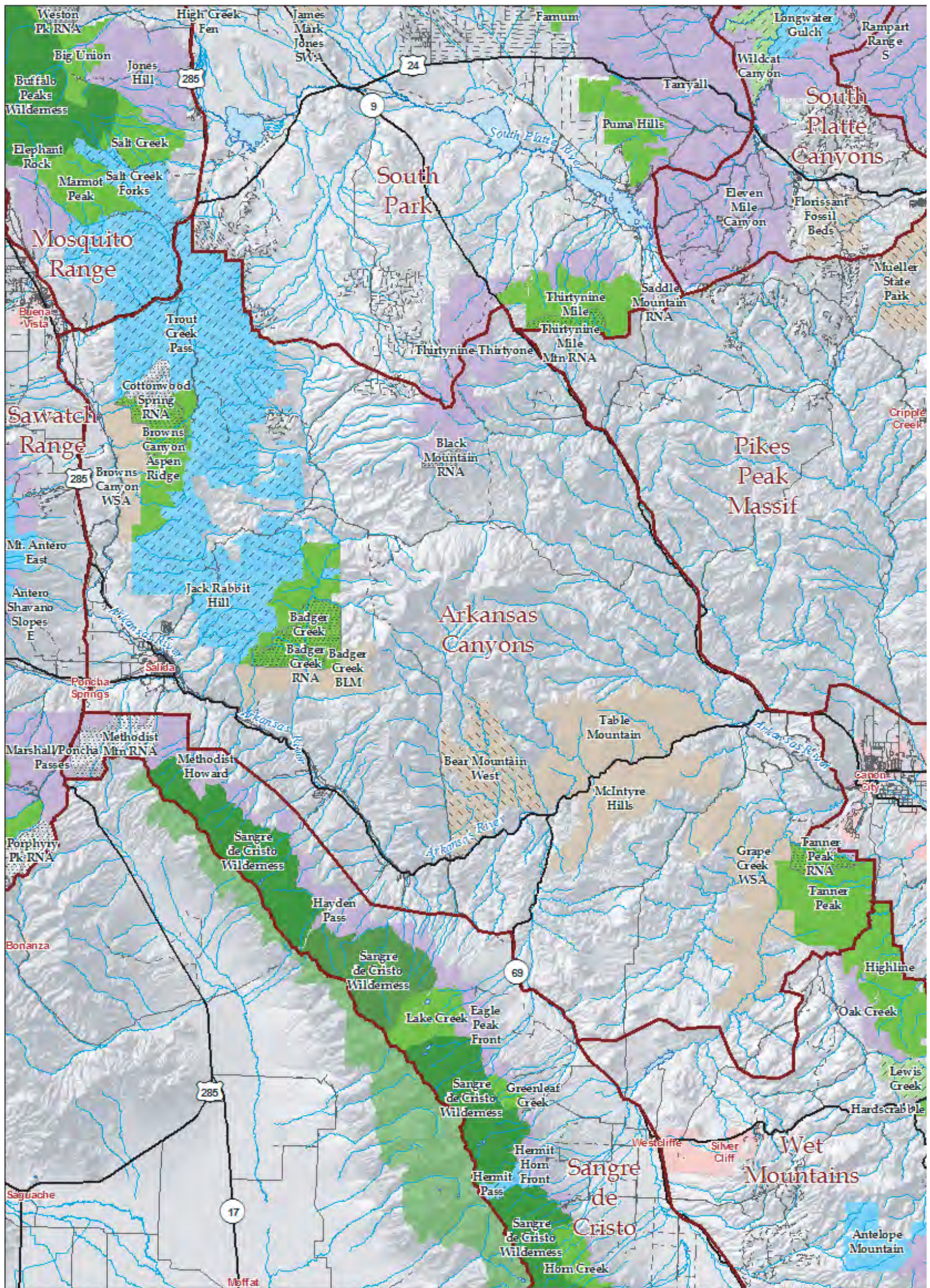


Badger Creek roadless area



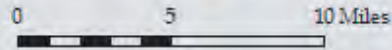
The Arkansas Canyons Complex includes the southern Mosquito Range and BLM lands along the Arkansas River canyon from Trout Creek Pass to the northern Wet Mountain valley and Royal Gorge.

Eleven complexes centered on geographical features encompass sections of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest, adjacent BLM, state, and private lands. Fitting together like a mosaic, they cover the headwaters of the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers.



Wild Connections Conservation Plan - Arkansas Canyons Complex

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interstate Highway U.S./State Highway Paved Road Improved Unpaved Railroad WCCP Complex City Wilderness Outside Pike/San Isabel 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCCP Proposed Management 1.1 Existing Wilderness 1.2 Recommended Wilderness 1.3 Core Reserve 2.1 Research Natural Areas 2.2 Experimental Forests 3.1 Quiet Use Areas 3.2 Connectivity Areas 4.1 Motorized Recreation Areas 5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat 8.1 Ski Based Resorts 8.2 Permanently Developed Areas 9.1 Non-USFS Recommend Wilderness 9.2 Significant Non-USFS Biological 	<p>Wild Connections Conservation Plan as of May 2006. Reference data from the US Geological Survey (mountains, 1981) US Forest Service (forest routes, 2002) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (roads, lakes, streams 2004).</p> <p>Copyright © Upper Arkansas and South Platte Project May 21, 2006</p>
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Map 5.2: Arkansas Canyons Complex Proposed Management

Note: This map is located in the pocket at back of the document for usability.

Description

Overview

The Arkansas Canyons complex includes the southern Mosquito Range and BLM lands along the Arkansas River canyon from Trout Creek Pass to the northern Wet Mountain Valley. The complex ranges from rugged canyons and challenging waterways along the Arkansas River and its tributaries to open unconfined vistas on the high plateau between the river and the edge of South Park.

A description of the landscape, vegetation, wildlife and ecological values, including detailed descriptions of roadless areas, is followed by the recommendations for the complex organized according to the management themes. A discussion of connectivity within the complex and to adjacent complexes is found at the end.

The landscape and wildlife

On the north, the watershed divide between the South Platte and the Arkansas basins at the southern edge of South Park and Highway 24/285 across Trout Creek Pass define the boundary of the complex. Highway 24 is on the west. The foothills of the Sangres and across the northern Wet Mountain Valley and Wet Mountains make up the southern boundary. On the east, the complex extends to CO 9 and Current Creek. The complex includes lands in Chaffee, Park, and Fremont Counties. The Arkansas River flows into the complex just south of Buena Vista and continues through Browns Canyon, turning southeast at Salida until it reaches Cotopaxi. Here the river turns northeast, entering Sheep Canyon with its rugged red rock formations and river rapids, until it reaches the Royal Gorge and continues on out of the complex through Cañon City. The Arkansas River descends from around 7,800 feet in the northwest to around 5,400 feet in the southeast. Waugh Mountain at 11,718 feet and Black Mountain at 11,654 feet, in the north central portion of the complex, form the high points of the complex. Significant tributaries to the Arkansas River from northwest to southeast include Trout Creek, Browns Creek, Ute Creek, Badger Creek, South Arkansas River, Texas Creek, Tallahassee Creek, Currant Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Copper Gulch, Oak Creek, and Grape Creek.

The vegetation on the National Forest lands within the Arkansas Canyons complex are fairly evenly divided among piñon-juniper near the Arkansas River, ponderosa pine east of Browns Canyon, and Douglas-fir southeast of Browns Canyon and east of Grape Creek. There are smaller areas of foothill and mountain grasslands east of Browns Canyon towards South Park, aspen on Aspen Ridge, semi-desert and sagebrush shrubland near Big Baldy Mountain, Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir mostly on Black Mountain, and prairie northeast of Browns Canyon. Black Mountain is noted for its ancient bristlecone pines. Much of the high plateau land within the complex is managed by the BLM and piñon-juniper is the most common vegetation type on these lands.

There is habitat for a large range of species including mountain lion, bobcat, black bear, mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, a variety of raptors and smaller mammals, and many others. Pronghorn antelope, mule deer, elk, and bighorn sheep have winter range and breeding areas particularly in the canyons near the Arkansas River and Grape Creek. The bighorn sheep band that roams both sides of the Arkansas River is notable. Current and historical rare and sensitive species include strigose Easter-daisy (*Townsendia strigosa*), Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*), Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*), American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), and common hog-nosed skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*). A number of rare or sensitive natural communities that reflect

the lower elevation and riparian ecosystems, such as cottonwoods, willows, and piñon-juniper, are found in the Arkansas Canyons complex.

Ecological values of the complex

In addition to providing all the typical canyon land and lower montane vegetation types supporting a wide range of species, the Arkansas Canyons complex includes many rich and unique biological areas. The proposed Research Natural Areas (RNA) within the complex are Badger Creek, Black Mountain, Cottonwood Spring, and Tanner Peak. In addition, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program lists more than twenty-five Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) in the complex with most having high, very high, or outstanding significance. The State of Colorado protects two State Fishing Units along the Arkansas River near Salida in the complex. There are four BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and one Colorado Natural Area, as well as three BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) in the complex. The Nature Conservancy’s Southern Rocky Mountains Conservation blueprint (TNC blueprint) includes most of the land along the Arkansas River and Grape Creek with moderate priorities. Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project’s Wildlands Network Vision (SREP’s Vision) proposes that most of the National Forest lands in the complex be protected as wilderness, wildlife linkages or low use areas. In addition, SREP’s Vision proposes wilderness and wildlife linkages on the lands along the Arkansas River outside of the National Forest. Clearly various conservation approaches rate the Arkansas Canyons complex highly for its biological richness.

Wilderness and Roadless Areas

Much of the roadless lands within the Arkansas Canyons are in the low elevation foothills and montane life zones that are not well protected as designated Wilderness in Colorado. Table 5.2 lists the roadless areas in the Arkansas Canyons.

Table 5.2: Arkansas Canyons Roadless Areas

Name	Acres (UASPP)	Roadless Under Roadless Rule
Arnold Gulch	8,600	Yes
Badger Creek	25,200	Yes*
Bear Mountain	17,500	n/a**
Browns Canyon/Aspen Ridge	24,400	Yes*
Grape Creek/Tanner Peak	44,200	Yes*
Kauffman Ridge	12,200	No
McIntyre Hills	17,300	n/a**
Table Mountain	25,500	n/a**

* Includes land managed by the US Forest Service and by the Bureau of Land Management

** Entirely on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management

Wilderness Areas

There are no currently designated wilderness areas within the Arkansas Canyons complex.

Unprotected roadless areas

The Upper Arkansas and South Platte Project mapped eight roadless areas in the Arkansas Canyons complex. The roadless areas include four that were originally part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule Inventoried Roadless Areas. Within the National Forest, one additional roadless area was found - Kauffman Ridge - that was not part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory. Outside the National Forest, typically on BLM lands, three additional roadless areas were mapped: Bear Mountain, Table Mountain, and the McIntyre Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The roadless areas in the Arkansas Canyons complex are described below from northwest to southeast roughly following the Arkansas River.

Kauffman Ridge

Kaufman Ridge is a 10-mile long area that follows the ridge south of Trout Creek Pass along the Chaffee and Park County line – the first ridge above the Board Cabins Gulch area of South Park.

The 12,200 acre Kauffman Ridge roadless area was not part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory.

The vegetation in the northeast end of the Kauffman Ridge roadless area is predominately Douglas-fir mixed with aspen. Ponderosa pine is found in the west portion, with large areas of aspen in the central and south-central areas. There are some scattered areas of mountain shrubland, and grasslands found along the west, south, and east sides of the roadless area. The headwaters for Trout Creek are in the center of the roadless area. Mountain parklands, wooded areas, interesting rock outcrops, and freshwater springs are all found in this roadless area. Rushes, mountain shrubs, and other wetland species are found along the numerous creeks and gulches in this area. Natural caves and quarries are also found here.

Elk and mule deer have both summer and winter range across the whole area, with calving areas on the north and south ends and a deer winter concentration area on the east side. Bighorn sheep winter range and a lambing area are found on the northwest side.

The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the northern and southern portions of the roadless area be managed as low use areas and the central portion be managed as a wildlife linkage.

Arnold Gulch

The Arnold Gulch roadless area is near the northwest corner of the Arkansas Canyons complex and includes Triad Ridge, Bald Mountain, and Bassam Park. Arnold Gulch descends between Triad Ridge and Bald Mountain flowing westward down to the Arkansas River. The Arnold Gulch roadless area at 8,600 acres is smaller than the corresponding area in the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory, likely due to heavy recreational vehicle usage between Arnold Gulch and Bald Mountain Gulch.

The vegetation in the north end of the Arnold Gulch roadless area is predominately Douglas-fir. Piñon-juniper is found in the lower western part and ponderosa pine in the southeastern part of the area. Riparian species along Arnold and Bald Mountain Gulches contrast sharply with the surrounding shrubland.

Elk and deer have both summer and winter range here, while bighorn sheep winter range and a lambing area are found in the Arnold Gulch area.

Amateur and professional paleontologists surveying Bassam Park in the Arnold Gulch roadless area found fossil remains of what they believe is the oldest dipnoans (lungfish) in the United States. This species of lungfish is known to have lived in freshwater environments. The Bassam Park survey provided evidence that dipnoans were also found in marine environments.

[http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2004AM/finalprogram/abstract_75220.htm]

The Cottonwood Spring proposed RNA includes lands in the southwestern part of the Arnold Gulch roadless area and is rated of high biological value by Center for Native Ecosystems. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that most of Arnold Gulch be managed as a wildlife linkage.

Browns Canyon

Browns Canyon is a whitewater canyon on the Arkansas River between Buena Vista and Salida. The Browns Canyon roadless area consists of 24,400 acres of the rugged canyon walls east of the

Arkansas River up to Aspen Ridge. The western half is the BLM's Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area (not included in the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory) and the eastern half is the USFS Aspen Ridge Inventoried Roadless Area. The boundaries of the Browns Canyon roadless area within the National Forest correspond approximately to the boundary for Aspen Ridge in the Roadless inventory. Some of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory area west of Coons Park in the northern portion was discovered to have roads and was excluded from the Browns Canyon roadless area. The area is noted for its rugged topography, which drops precipitously from Aspen Ridge down to the river, with many large rock formations and meandering side canyons.

Vegetation in Browns Canyon is predominately piñon-juniper with some areas of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir in the higher eastern areas. There are scattered areas of bristlecone and limber pine, a few aspen stands – although most aspen are to the east of the roadless area – and isolated grassland openings.

Pronghorn antelope winter range is found five miles west of the Browns Canyon roadless area over the ridge in South Park and a migration corridor runs from there west to the Arkansas Valley, skirting the south end of Browns Canyon. Elk winter range and calving areas are found here. Bighorn sheep utilize the roadless lands for winter range and lambing areas, which are located on the northern and southern extremities of the area. Mule deer can be found here in all seasons, with a large winter concentration area in the central part of the area. Rare and sensitive plants and natural communities include the strigose Easter-daisy (*Townsendia strigosa*), narrowleaf cottonwood/Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia/Juniperus scopulorum*) montane riparian forests, and water birch/mesic forb (*Betula occidentalis/mesic forb*) foothills riparian shrubland.

The Cottonwood Spring proposed RNA includes lands in the northern part of the Browns Canyon roadless area and is rated of high biological value by Center for Native Ecosystems. The Browns Canyon ACEC covers all the BLM portion of the Browns Canyon roadless area. The Browns Canyon on Arkansas River PCA is rated an area of very high significance and includes the river corridor and significant lands in the lower elevations and up the Cottonwood Creek drainage. The Nature Conservancy's large Cottonwood Pass conservation blueprint area is of moderate conservation value and includes lands in the Browns Canyon roadless area. SREP's Vision proposes that the roadless area be managed as core wilderness. The Browns Canyon Wilderness Bill has been introduced in both the House and Senate with action expected during this Congressional session.

Badger Creek

Badger Creek flows south from the western edge of South Park, crossing state, BLM and National Forest land as it makes its way to the Arkansas River. The 25,200 acre Badger Creek roadless area is east of Salida and includes lands on both sides of Badger Creek north of the Arkansas River. The boundaries of the Badger Creek roadless area within the National Forest are a bit larger than the boundaries in the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory. The Badger Creek roadless area also includes BLM lands southeast and southwest of the roadless forest lands. These contiguous lands add additional lower elevation habitat on the south part of the roadless area.

Vegetation in Badger Creek is predominately piñon-juniper, with some areas of semi-desert shrublands and sage on the southwest. Large aspen stands and montane grasslands intermingle in the uplands, while ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir cover higher elevations in the north. There are several important riparian plant communities: narrowleaf cottonwood/coyote willow riparian

forests (*Populus angustifolia/Salix exigua*), montane wet meadows with water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*); two types of montane riparian forest, narrowleaf cottonwood/thinleaf alder (*Populus angustifolia/Alnus incana*) and narrowleaf cottonwood/water birch (*P. angustifolia/Betula occidentalis*), and two coyote willow communities (*Salix exigua*/bare ground and *S. exigua*/mesic graminoid).

Elk winter range is found throughout Badger Creek roadless area and two elk calving grounds are located just east of the roadless area. Elk migration corridors connect Browns Canyon, the Black Mountain vicinity, and Badger Creek, with one corridor passing through the northern portion of the roadless area. Mule deer have both summer and winter range across the area, with high winter concentrations on the southeast side. High summer bear activity is found across the whole area. Bighorn sheep frequent the canyon in summer, and in winter they concentrate at the north end of the roadless area in the Badger Creek canyon. There is a large bighorn lambing area in the north part, as well. The not-so-common hog-nosed skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*) is found here. Mountain lions frequent the area and bald eagles have been observed by hikers.

The Badger Creek proposed RNA is completely contained in the Badger Creek roadless area. The southeastern corner of the roadless area is a PCA of high significance. The Nature Conservancy Middle Arkansas River conservation portfolio area of moderate significance intersects the south end of the roadless area. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that most of the roadless area be managed as core wilderness and the rest as wildlife linkage.

Bear Mountain

The Bear Mountain roadless area of 17,500 acres extends north from the Arkansas River between Bernard Creek on the west and Texas Creek Gulch and East Gulch on the east. It is northeast of Cotopaxi and northwest of the community of Texas Creek. The Bear Mountain roadless area is primarily on land managed by the BLM, identified in the agency's wilderness inventory process. It is not on Forest Service land and, therefore, was not part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory.

Vegetation in the roadless lands is predominately piñon-juniper with wetland and riparian species along the Arkansas River and along Fernleaf Gulch in the south central part of the area. At the northern end there are some areas of foothills and mountain grassland and ponderosa pine. Rare plant communities include coyote willow/bare ground (*Salix exigua*/bare ground), narrowleaf cottonwood/water birch (*Populus angustifolia/Betula occidentalis*), narrowleaf cottonwood/Douglas-fir (*P. angustifolia-Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and narrowleaf cottonwood/coyote willow (*Populus angustifolia/Salix exigua*) riparian forests. There are many locations of the rare Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*).

Bighorn sheep summer and winter range is found across the southeastern part of the area, with winter concentrations and a large lambing area in the south central portion of the area. Bear Mountain is part of a large winter concentration zone for mule deer that runs from east of Badger Creek to well south of the Arkansas River. High summer bear activity is found across the whole area.

The Cotopaxi PCA intersects the southwest corner of Bear Mountain and the Echo Canyon at East Gulch PCA intersects the eastern side of the roadless area – both are rated as having very high biodiversity. Much of Bear Mountain is within The Nature Conservancy Middle Arkansas River conservation portfolio area of moderate conservation value. The Southern Rockies

Wildlands Network Vision proposes that most of Bear Mountain be managed as a wildlife linkage.

Table Mountain

Table Mountain is a high plateau with elevations to 9,500 feet south and west of Tallahassee Creek and north of the Arkansas River. Texas Creek Gulch and East Gulch bound the roadless area on the west. It is northeast of the community of Texas Creek and northwest of Parkdale. The Table Mountain roadless area is approximately 25,500 acres and is primarily on land administered by the BLM, identified in the agency's wilderness inventory process. The roadless area is not on Forest Service land and, therefore, was not part of the Forest Service's Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory.

Vegetation in the Table Mountain roadless area is predominately piñon pine and juniper. In the higher northern reaches of the area there is some mountain shrubland, semi-desert and sagebrush shrubland and ponderosa pine, as well as expanses of unusual foothills and mountain grassland. Rare plant communities include coyote willow/mesic graminoid (*Salix exigua*/ mesic graminoid), narrowleaf cottonwood/water birch (*Populus angustifolia*/*Betula occidentalis*) montane riparian forests, and narrowleaf cottonwood/coyote willow (*Populus angustifolia*/*Salix exigua*) riparian forests. There are a number of locations of the rare Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*) and Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*) is found here.

Bighorn sheep summer range is found across most of the area, with winter range and a large lambing area on the south side. The sizeable Arkansas Canyon bighorn sheep band frequents this section of the canyon, on both sides of the river, generally separated into two groups, as the river and Highway 50 are a formidable barrier for wildlife moving north and south. Mule deer are found here both summer and winter, with major winter concentrations only on the far west side and into the Texas Creek/East Creek drainage and Bear Mountain roadless area. Like many other areas in this complex, high summer bear activity is found across the whole area and mountain lion frequent the area.

The McIntyre Hills BLM WSA and roadless area is located immediately to the south, separated only by the Arkansas River and Highway 50. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project has identified a linkage for bighorn sheep between the Table Mountain roadless area and the McIntyre Hills roadless area. The linkage is rated as having low priority for ecological significance.

The Echo Canyon at East Gulch PCA intersects the western side of Table Mountain and is rated as having very high biodiversity. The BLM High Mesa ACEC, which is also the Colorado Natural Area Program's High Mesa Grasslands Natural Area, is located in the northeast portion of Table Mountain. The Arkansas Canyonlands ACEC covers nearly all of Table Mountain. Much of the roadless area is within The Nature Conservancy Middle Arkansas River blueprint area of moderate conservation value. The SREP's vision proposes that most of the roadless area be managed as core wilderness.

McIntyre Hills

The McIntyre Hills roadless area lies south of the Arkansas River from Texas Creek to Parkdale. It is bounded on the west by Colorado Highway 69, on the east by the Copper Gulch Road, and on the south by the BLM boundary north of the Copper Gulch and Road Gulch. The McIntyre Hills roadless area covers 17,300 acres just south of the Table Mountain roadless area, separated only by the Arkansas River and Highway 50. The McIntyre Hills roadless area is managed by the

BLM as a Wilderness Study Area. The roadless area is not on Forest Service land and, therefore, was not part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory.

Vegetation in the McIntyre Hills roadless area is predominately piñon-juniper, with scattered Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine in higher southern reaches.

High summer black bear activity is found across the whole area and mountain lion frequent the area. Elk and mule deer summer and winter range is found in McIntyre Hills. The roadless lands are part of a large elk concentration area extending southwest to the Sangre de Cristos and southeast to the Wet Mountains. Bighorn sheep summer range is found across most of the area, with winter range and a large lambing area on the north side. The sizeable Arkansas Canyon bighorn sheep band frequents this section of the canyon, on both sides of the river, generally separated into two groups, as the river and Highway 50 are a formidable barrier for wildlife moving north and south. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project has identified a linkage for bighorn sheep between the McIntyre Hills roadless area and the Table Mountain roadless area to the north across the Arkansas River. The linkage is rated as having low priority for ecological significance. Rare and sensitive species found here include the Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*) and Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*).

The Echo Canyon at East Gulch PCA barely intersects the far western side of McIntyre Hills and is rated as having very high biodiversity. The McIntyre Hills PCA intersects the northern part of McIntyre Hills along the river and is rated as having very high biodiversity. The BLM Arkansas Canyonlands ACEC overlaps the roadless area on the north and west. Much of McIntyre Hills is within The Nature Conservancy Middle Arkansas River portfolio area of moderate conservation value. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that all of McIntyre Hills be managed as core wilderness.

Grape Creek

Grape Creek's headwaters begin in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The creek flows through DeWeese Reservoir in the Wet Mountain Valley and then northeast to join the Arkansas River east of the Royal Gorge. The Grape Creek roadless area, located southwest of Cañon City and south of the Royal Gorge, includes 44,200 acres of land on both sides of the creek upstream from its confluence with the Arkansas. The creek traverses the Grape Creek BLM Wilderness Study Area. East of the creek is the Forest Service Tanner Peak Inventoried Roadless Area. The combined BLM-Forest Service roadless area extends southeast from South Webster Park onto the DeWeese Plateau between Copper Gulch on the west and Oak Creek on the east.

Vegetation in the Grape Creek roadless area is predominately piñon-juniper and Gambel oak shrublands on the west with Douglas-fir and some ponderosa pine and Gambel oak on the higher forested portion to the east. Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*) and Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*) are rare plants found here. Several sensitive montane riparian forest and riparian woodland natural communities: Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), narrowleaf cottonwood/Douglas-fir (*Populus angustifolia-Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and narrowleaf cottonwood/Rocky Mountain juniper (*P. angustifolia-Juniperus scopulorum*) were identified here. There are large ponderosa pines in the Grape Creek flood plain near the confluence with Bear Creek.

Pronghorn antelope migrate through the west side of the area, moving between winter range located north of Grape Creek as far as the Arkansas River and a very large winter range in the Wet Mountain Valley. Elk and mule deer summer and winter range is found across all of Grape Creek. Bighorn sheep winter range and lambing areas are found in Grape Creek. High summer

bear activity is found across the whole area, and the more-forested eastern portion is an area of high fall activity for bears. Mountain lion frequent the area. American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) can be found here, as the canyons provide good habitat.

There are two PCAs in Grape Creek. Grape Creek at Bear Gulch follows the creek through the whole area and is rated as having very high biodiversity. Curley Peak PCA, located in the east central part of Grape Creek, is rated as having very high biodiversity. The BLM Grape Creek ACEC encompasses the center of the area, generally following the creek. The Nature Conservancy's conservation blueprint Middle Arkansas River and Greenhorn Mountain areas, which are of moderate conservation value, include land in the middle of Grape Creek. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that all of Grape Creek be managed as core wilderness.

Historical and Cultural Features of the Arkansas Canyons

Some archeological, historical and cultural features of note include the following:

- Captain Zebulon Montgomery Pike came into this area after failing to summit the peak that now bears his name. In early December 1806 he and his twenty-three man brigade went due north from Cañon City into South Park, proceeded across Trout Creek Pass and following what they thought was the Red River, to their surprise, found themselves back where they started. They noted the cold weather and wondered if they had found the source of the Red River. [McTighe, 1989]
- Salida, between the Browns Canyon and Badger Creek roadless areas, has a long history as a supply town for mining and farming. On April 29, 1855 a surprise attack near present day Salida by the US Cavalry on a tribe of Ute Indians was a major victory in the long battle with Indians in Colorado. This was a major factor in opening up the state for settlement. However, the city fathers were not successful in their bid in 1881 to have Salida declared the state capital.
- Royal Gorge at the eastern edge of the complex was the site of a struggle to secure the right of way for a railroad line. The Denver & Rio Grande railroad battled the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. In 1878 and 1879 the contest was waged on the ground and in the courts with the Denver & Rio Grand railroad eventually winning the right of way. By 1880 the train had reached Salida. A unique cantilevered bridge across the gorge is a great tourist attraction to this day, although it goes to no destination other than the opposite cliff.
- A cattleman named Texas Creek, near the Bear Mountain, Table Mountain and McIntyre Hills roadless areas. The town of Texas Creek was established around 1880. [McTighe, 1989]
- Cotopaxi, near the Bear Mountain roadless area, was the site of an agricultural colony of Russian-American Jews from 1882-1884. Poor farming conditions and the greed of the colony's founder led to the colony's demise.
- Turret, near the Browns Canyon roadless area, is a historic gold mining camp that was founded in 1897. Turret had a peak of 400 residents in 1941 and has historic structures still standing.
- Numerous other mines and historic mining settlements exist in the complex.
- A short-lived railroad was constructed along Grape Creek from Cañon City to Westcliffe, but washed out in a matter of months, never to be rebuilt. The roadbed and a few small building foundations are visible in a few locations along the stream.

Management Recommendations

Overview

Because of the ecological value of permanent protection, the Wild Connections team recommends three National Forest areas for future Wilderness designation (Theme 1) in the Arkansas Canyons complex, as well as recommending five non-National Forest future Wilderness areas. There are four new proposed RNAs (Theme 2); two connectivity areas (Theme 3), and one area recommended for active management as wildlife habitat (Theme 5). Grazing, sustainable logging/fuels reduction projects, mining or energy development, recreation on designated trails and roads, and dispersed camping is allowed throughout the complex, except for statutory restrictions on activities in designated or proposed wilderness areas. Table 5.3 lists the major management units by theme. Refer to the Arkansas Canyons Complex map for specific locations and roadless area descriptions for more details on the unit.

Table 5.3: Arkansas Canyons Management Recommendations

Name	Acres	Recommended Management
Theme 1 – Natural Processes Dominate		
Badger Creek	16,600	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (with BLM area Badger Creek)
Browns Canyon Aspen Ridge	12,100	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (with BLM area Browns Canyon)
Tanner Peak	17,100	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (with BLM area Grape Creek)
Theme 2 – Special Areas		
Badger Creek RNA	8,500	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Black Mountain RNA	1,200	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Cottonwood Spring RNA	7,900	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Tanner Peak RNA	3,600	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Theme 3 – Natural Landscapes with Limited Management		
Jack Rabbit Hill	35,800	3.2 Connectivity Areas
Trout Creek Pass (also in Mosquito Range)	73,900	3.2 Connectivity Areas
Theme 5 – Active Management		
Thirtynine-Thirtyone	27,900	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Theme 9 – Significant Lands (Non-USFS)		
Badger Creek BLM	8,700	9.1 Non-USFS Recommended Wilderness
Browns Canyon WSA	7,900	9.1 Non-USFS Recommended Wilderness
Grape Creek WSA	27,200	9.1 Non-USFS Recommended Wilderness
McIntyre Hills	17,300	9.1 Non-USFS Recommended Wilderness
Table Mountain	25,500	9.1 Non-USFS Recommended Wilderness
Bear Mountain West	17,500	9.2 Significant Non-USFS Biological

Theme 1 – Natural Processes Dominate

Lands are managed to maintain highly natural conditions and management activities are virtually unnoticeable. They may include Wilderness as well as semi-primitive lands that provide user opportunities that are inconsistent with Wilderness such as mountain biking

Theme 1.2 – Recommended Wilderness

Recommended Wilderness areas are those that stakeholders advocate for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. All of the proposed Wilderness areas meet the capability requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 for designation.

The Wild Connections Conservation Plan calls for designation of (west to east) of the Forest Service Aspen Ridge part of the larger Browns Canyon proposed Wilderness, Badger Creek, and the Tanner Peak part of the larger proposed Grape Creek Wilderness. The Browns Canyon Wilderness Bill was introduced in the House and Senate in November 2005. These proposed Wilderness areas are each described in detail in the roadless area descriptions above. In general, the proposed Wilderness boundary is the same as the UASPP roadless boundary. The following benefits were considered in making Wilderness recommendations: permanent protection to enhance wildlife habitat and connectivity, protecting sources of domestic water, providing for native species and balancing motorized, high impact recreation in other parts of the complex with opportunities for quiet, challenging back country recreation. Of most importance, adding these Wilderness areas will expand the representation of protected low elevation ecosystems in the Pike-San Isabel, Region 2, and the National Wilderness System. They will also maintain some balance between unroaded areas and the heavy motorized use across both the Forest and BLM lands, especially in the Texas Creek vicinity.

We believe that all of these areas meet the capability, availability, and suitability criteria of the Wilderness Act and Forest Service Wilderness Handbook. These criteria are discussed for the complex as a whole, below, with notations as to particular values or potential conflicts.

Capability

All of the proposed Wildernesses meet the capability requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 for designation. They all provide opportunities for solitude, challenge, and unconfined recreation once the trailheads are left behind. There are rugged canyons, steep ravines, and deep valleys without trails, high plateau lands with long undisturbed views, and forested ridges. The imprints of humans are substantially unnoticeable, as care was taken to exclude major mining areas and recent logging operations. Historic mining operations are primarily outside of the proposed wildernesses. At the same time, remnants of human habitation and use give clear pictures of the mining history of the area, while providing a lesson in the length of time it takes for nature to heal in an unforgiving climate. Logging was limited within the proposed wilderness and old access roads are recovering, bringing an end to signs of human use.

Availability

All the proposed areas are available for Wilderness with no known impediments. The proposed Wildernesses contain no active mines. The watersheds and streams are already allocated, and no new water projects are planned. Major highways are not anticipated to affect the areas. The Arkansas Canyons complex is not appropriate for timber harvest. The vegetation within the area is largely intact with much of it tending toward mature and old growth characteristics. All or part of Bassam, Aspen Ridge, and Cameron C & H grazing allotments would be grandfathered in with Wilderness designation, although over time they could be retired, where feasible. Overall, there are no known or anticipated threats to the proposed wilderness areas that would preclude their designation as wilderness.

Suitability

The main uses that would be forgone in newly designated Wilderness are those of motorized recreation on newly created or illegal roads. However, the development history of this complex has created considerable motorized access to the perimeters of the roadless areas. Dispersed

camping and motorized recreation would still be permitted in and around the Arnold Ridge, Kauffman Gulch, and Aspen Ridge roadless areas near Browns Canyon and in the gulches and old mining areas between Browns Canyon and Badger Creek. The high plateau lands above the Arkansas River Canyons can be accessed through Texas Creek Gulch west of Table Mountain roadless area, while Copper Gulch between McIntyre Hills and Grape Creek provides access to the DeWeese Plateau and Wet Mountain Valley. The Tanner Peak portion of Grape Creek contains several motorized trails that would need to be converted to foot and horse travel. Wilderness designation will protect these unique wild areas from damage by off-road vehicles.

The designation of the proposed Wildernesses would enhance numerous ecological, economic, and social values present in this complex:

- The areas add low-elevation ecosystems, often with substantial riparian zones, to the National Wilderness System, including lands along the Arkansas River, Badger Creek and Grape Creek.
- Grape Creek, McIntyre Hills and Table Mountain form a unit along the Arkansas River Canyon providing ecological linkages from the Wet Mountains to South Park. Badger Creek and Browns Canyon extends the connectivity west and north towards the Mosquito Range.
- Habitat protection is provided for many rare and endangered plants and animals, including Strigose Easter-daisy (*Townsendia strigosa*), Arkansas Canyon stickleaf (*Nuttallia densa*), Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*), American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), and the not-so-common common hog-nosed skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*).
- Domestic agricultural water supplies are best protected from erosion and pollution when they are located on roadless lands. The Arkansas Canyons complex includes many tributaries to the Arkansas River that provides the water supply for Pueblo and many farming communities in Eastern Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri. The Arkansas is the longest tributary in the Missouri-Mississippi system and is the fourth largest river in the United States.
- Designation of this complex would help ensure that the impacts of fragmentation by roads, damage to riparian zones, loss of old-growth forests, and conversion to intensive recreation would not be exacerbated.
- Solitude and backcountry recreational challenge in the canyons or uplands greet the hiker who can enjoy dramatic views into the canyons from above and complete quiet in the valleys below.
- Rugged canyons and challenging white water are key attractions that bring recreationists, tourists, and new residents to Colorado. With the proposed wildernesses providing pristine and scenic backdrops for hundreds of thousands of Arkansas River recreationists, maintaining the area's wilderness characteristics is crucial.
- Local economies will be enhanced by their proximity to Wilderness areas, as these are prime destinations for self-guided and outfitter-supported trips.

Theme 2.1 – Research Natural Areas: Existing and Proposed

Research Natural Areas (RNAs) form a long-term network of ecological reserves designated for research, education, and the maintenance of biodiversity. Emphasis is on research, study, observations, monitoring, and educational activities that allow ecological processes to prevail with minimal human intervention.

To supplement the range of research opportunities and to increase ecosystem representation, we recommend that Badger Creek, Black Mountain, Cottonwood Spring, and Tanner Peak be added to the RNA system. Each has its unique combination of ecological values that will enhance the system:

- The Badger Creek proposed RNA, some 8,500 acres, is entirely contained within the Badger Creek proposed wilderness area. The area has high-quality, diverse ecologic and geologic features, including old woodlands with excellent potential habitat for Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*). Several sensitive montane grasslands, montane meadow, and montane forest natural communities including riparian areas were identified in or near the proposed RNA. The area also possesses potential for riparian and watershed restoration research. The common hog-nosed skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*), now rare, existed historically in the Badger Creek area where there is hope for its recovery. There are several important riparian plant communities: narrowleaf cottonwood/coyote willow (*Populus angustifolia/Salix exigua*) riparian forests, montane wet meadows with water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*); two types of montane riparian forest, narrowleaf cottonwood/thinleaf alder (*Populus angustifolia/Alnus incana*) and narrowleaf cottonwood/water birch (*P. angustifolia/Betula occidentalis*), and two coyote willow communities (*Salix exigua*/bare ground and *S. exigua*/mesic graminoid).
- Black Mountain proposed RNA of 1,200 acres provides a high-quality ecosystem at the transition between the high plateau above the Arkansas River and South Park. The oldest documented Rocky Mountain bristlecone pines occupy 1,800 contiguous acres in Black Mountain. The area also contains a good representation of montane grasslands, aspen, and Engelmann spruce. Three rare plant associations, bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue (*Pinus aristata/Festuca thurberi*); Parry's oatgrass (*Danthonia parryi*); and bristlecone pine/gooseberry currant (*Pinus aristata/Ribes montigenum*), are present in the area. The area also contains some unique rock formations.
- The Cottonwood Spring proposed RNA, some 7,900 acres, includes lands in the northern part of the Browns Canyon roadless area and lands in the southwestern part of the Arnold Gulch roadless area. The area is primarily piñon-juniper forest and is rated of high biological value by Center for Native Ecosystems and is considered a valuable wildlife linking in the Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision. It includes a bighorn lambing area, an elk calving area, and a mule deer winter concentration area.
- The Tanner Peak proposed RNA, some 3,600 acres, lies within the Forest Service portion of the proposed Grape Creek wilderness area. It contains intact plant communities and a good representation of lower montane habitats, including ponderosa pine forests in climax stage, as well as high-quality, relatively old piñon-juniper woodlands. Peregrine falcons have been documented in the area. Degener beardtongue (*Penstemon degeneri*), one of the rarest and least-known penstemons in Colorado, has also been reported in the area.

Theme 3 – Natural Landscapes with Limited Management

Theme 3 management maintains or restores the natural character of these areas while providing limited opportunities for recreation, including backcountry motorized and non-motorized settings. Fuels treatment and prescribed fire are conducted primarily to maintain or restore natural ecological conditions. Livestock grazing is common.

Theme 3.2 – Connectivity Areas

Management emphasis is to facilitate daily, seasonal, and natal dispersal movements of native wildlife between larger blocks of suitable habitat.

The Jack Rabbit Hill unit connects Badger Creek to Browns Canyon across the Badger Creek tributaries and the Ute Creek drainage. The forest lands here are intermingled with private parcels and there are many unimproved dirt roads which fragment the habitat. However, there is summer and

winter range for mule deer, bighorn sheep and elk, with a large east-west elk migration corridor in this connectivity unit.

The Trout Creek Pass connectivity unit east of Aspen Ridge and across Trout Creek Pass into the Mosquito Range complex is less fragmented in terms of land ownership, as it is primarily forest land, but it too has many roads. The Arnold Gulch and Kauffman roadless areas are part of this connectivity linkage. This unit includes winter and summer range for deer, bighorn sheep and elk, as well as lambing and calving grounds, and are a link to the existing and proposed Wildernesses in the Mosquito Range complex. In addition, both units provide east-west connections across the considerable state and BLM lands in the Badger Creek headwaters between Browns Canyon, Badger Creek and the Black Mountain area, which is notable for the large nexus of elk migration paths. Management emphasis will facilitate daily, seasonal, and natal dispersal movements of native wildlife between larger blocks of suitable habitat. A broader discussion of connectivity is found below.

Theme 5 – Active Management

These areas are managed to meet a variety of ecological and human needs with active management for a full spectrum of multiple use activities such as: wildlife habitat, energy development, timber harvest, livestock grazing, dispersed motorized recreation, prescribed fire, and vegetation treatments. This zone is where intensive timber management can occur for commercial production and fuels reduction objectives.

Theme 5.1 – Active Management for Wildlife Habitat

Management objective is to provide high quality, all-season habitat, forage, cover, escape terrain, solitude breeding habitat, and protection for a variety of wildlife species and associated plant communities.

The National Forest lands in the Thirtynine-Thirtyone unit connect Black Mountain to South Park. It has extensive summer and winter range for deer and elk, high summer black bear activity, and the South Park pronghorn visit the area especially on the north near the Thirtynine Mile roadless area. The unit may seem isolated from other Forest lands. In fact, it is connected to Kauffman Ridge on the west and Badger Creek to the south by other public lands, including a large parcel of state land and a number of BLM parcels. The mountain peaks, especially at the south on Black Mountain, have Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, and much of the area is mixed ponderosa pine Douglas-fir, and aspen, with many areas of high quality montane grasslands. This multiple use designation has provisions that will enhance wildlife considerations. Seasonal or permanent restrictions should be applied to sensitive wildlife areas, such as winter range and production areas for ungulates.

Theme 9 – Significant Lands (Non-USFS)

Theme 9 management is used to highlight and acknowledge other lands critical to both habitat and connectivity, such as adjacent BLM lands. It is critical that Forest management consider the greater ecosystem to which it is connected and that forest activities be compatible with management activities on these adjacent public lands.

The Arkansas Canyons complex is unique in the larger landscape of the two watersheds from both ecological and management perspectives. It has the largest extent of low-elevation habitats, most of which are located on BLM lands. In addition there are extensive areas of state lands that contribute to wildlife habitat in the north-central part of the complex and to recreation in the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area. Especially representative of the Significant Lands Theme are the wilderness quality BLM lands found along the Arkansas River, discussed below. Even though these are outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, they are included in the Wild Connections Conservation Plan because of their contributions to wildlife habitat, biodiversity, connectivity, and recreation.

Theme 9.1 – Non-Forest Service Recommended Wilderness

Wild Connections has explicitly included seven large BLM managed roadless areas as they are integral to our overall vision as wilderness core reserves.

Browns Canyon WSA portion of Browns Canyon proposed Wilderness

A description of this part of Browns Canyon proposed Wilderness is found with the description of roadless areas above. Some highlights include large areas of piñon-juniper forest, riparian areas in tributaries of the Arkansas River, a large proposed RNA at Cottonwood Creek and backcountry recreation for hikers, horseback riders, and rafting groups. The west boundary excludes the Arkansas River and/or the railroad, and adjustments were made in the boundary to accommodate popular lunch stops for the white river rafters. The Browns Canyon portion of the Arkansas is one of the most popular whitewater runs in Colorado, and the economic contribution of the adjacent Wilderness for the tourism industry should not be underestimated. In addition, the area is a topological and ecological whole in spite of the arbitrary, straight line boundary which divides BLM and USFS jurisdictions.

McIntyre Hills WSA

McIntyre Hills is entirely BLM land that has been recommended for Wilderness designation for many years by the agency and conservation groups. Its Wilderness values are recognized in its Wilderness Study Area designation. The low elevations and piñon-juniper woodlands are valuable for bear, mountain lion, elk, and bighorn sheep, among others. Its location is strategic in that it provides protected public lands that connect Grape Creek to the southeast and Table Mountain directly north. Recreation access is challenging, as there are no established trails inside the WSA, but available year-round.

Grape Creek WSA portion of Grape Creek proposed Wilderness

The BLM WSA portion of the Grape Creek Wilderness is integral to the system of connected landscapes in this part of the Arkansas Canyons complex. Elk, mule deer, bear, and mountain lion are found in the area, and the riparian corridor of Grape Creek itself is a rare occurrence in these dry canyon lands where perennial streams are scarce. Access to the creek in Bear Gulch also provides excellent backcountry fishing, wildlife viewing, and hiking.

Table Mountain proposed Wilderness

At more than 25,000 acres, this stunning area rises from the edge of the Arkansas River to a high plateau to the north along Tallahassee Creek. East Creek and Texas Creek on the west and Echo Canyon in the center are among the many canyons incised into the roadless area. It is entirely on BLM land, and also includes the High Mesa Grasslands Colorado Natural Area and the large Arkansas Canyon ACEC. Because of its lower elevations, extremely rugged and wild character, it has been recommended by conservation groups as a Wilderness area.

Theme 9.2 – Significant Non-Forest Service Biological Areas

The BLM area west of Texas Creek, including the Bear Mountain roadless area, is important for the riparian zone in Fernleaf Gulch, the low elevation piñon-juniper woodlands which provide wildlife habitat and the roadless nature of the eastern portion. Intensive recreation along Texas Creek Gulch and East Gulch reduce the opportunities for solitude and a wilderness experience. Although the Forest Service has no jurisdiction here, it should be kept in mind as part of the larger landscape and for connectivity among various other areas.

Connectivity

An important aspect of the Wild Connections Conservation Plan vision is the preservation of connections between protected core areas. The Arkansas Canyons complex is an example of the core reserve model, which features protected core areas connected by wildlife linkages. However, the core areas proposed in the Arkansas Canyons may be smaller than is ideal for some species.

Connectivity among the roadless areas is best in the southeast portion of the complex. Here BLM's Bear Mountain, Table Mountain, McIntyre Hills and Grape Creek are adjacent to each other – although Highway 50 is a barrier. Badger Creek, Black Mountain, and Browns Canyon in the northwest are isolated from each other, and intervening public and private land contains many roads. However, the large parcels of additional Forest Service, BLM and state lands that lie between these areas do, provide good connecting habitat, especially for ungulates. Within the complex, the major barrier to animal movement is US Highway 50. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project has identified a linkage for bighorn sheep across US Highway 50 and the Arkansas River in the east-central Arkansas Canyons complex. Numerous Forest Service and county roads within the complex may be barriers especially to smaller animals and plants. However, the proposed management of some roaded areas for animal movement would provide an opportunity to address these issues.

There are major barriers to connectivity between the Arkansas Canyons and the Mosquito, Sawatch and Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges. Between the Arkansas Canyons complex and the Mosquito Range complex to the north, US Highway 285 is a barrier to animal movement. The land between the northwestern portion of the Arkansas Canyons and the southern Mosquito Range is primarily managed by the Forest Service and is proposed in Wild Connections to be managed for animal linkages. US Highway 285 and human settlement in the Arkansas River Valley are major barriers to animal movement between the Arkansas Canyons and Sawatch Range to the west. Similarly, US Highway 50 and Colorado Routes 69 and 96 and human settlement in the Wet Mountain Valley are barriers between the Arkansas Canyons and the Sangre de Cristo mountains, although this area is not as densely populated as the Arkansas River Valley. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project has identified a linkage for bighorn sheep and deer across US Highway 50 between the Sangre de Cristo complex and the Arkansas Canyons complex. Connectivity between the Arkansas Canyons and South Park area and between Arkansas Canyons and the Wet Mountains is fairly good. County and other rural roads form barriers between the Arkansas Canyons and South Park complex to the north, but there is little human habitation in that area. The Grape Creek proposed Wilderness area in the southeast portion of the Arkansas Canyons complex is directly adjacent to the Highline proposed Wilderness area in the Wet Mountains complex, separated only by the Oak Creek forest road 143.

Summary

The Arkansas Canyons complex is the best example of low-elevation ecosystems and extensive canyon lands in the two watersheds. This provides variety not only within the complex, but especially adds to the range of diversity across the South Platte and Arkansas basins. It also provides opportunities for four-season backcountry recreation that may not be available in other locations. The Forest Service has jurisdiction over only part of the complex, as there are extensive BLM areas, but Forest management should take all of these lands into consideration. The deep canyons, high plateaus, and piñon-juniper, Douglas-fir, aspen, and ponderosa pine forests are important to the network of wildlands that will sustain the integrity of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest, both now and in the foreseeable future.