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.

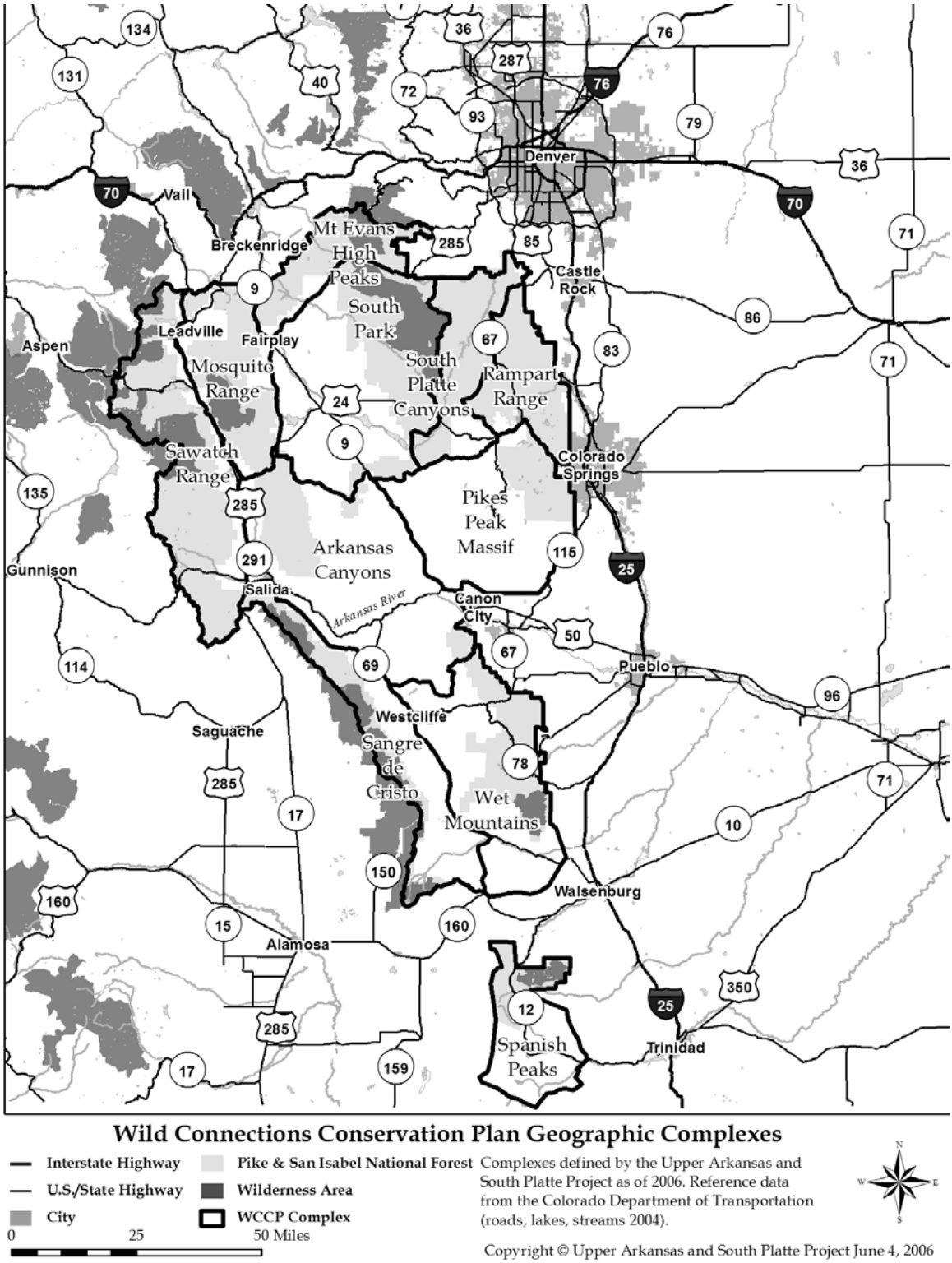
Complexes – Summary List by Watershed

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

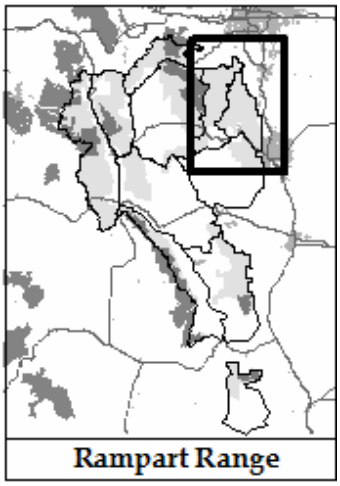
Complexes – Map Locater

Map 5.1: Wild Connections Complexes



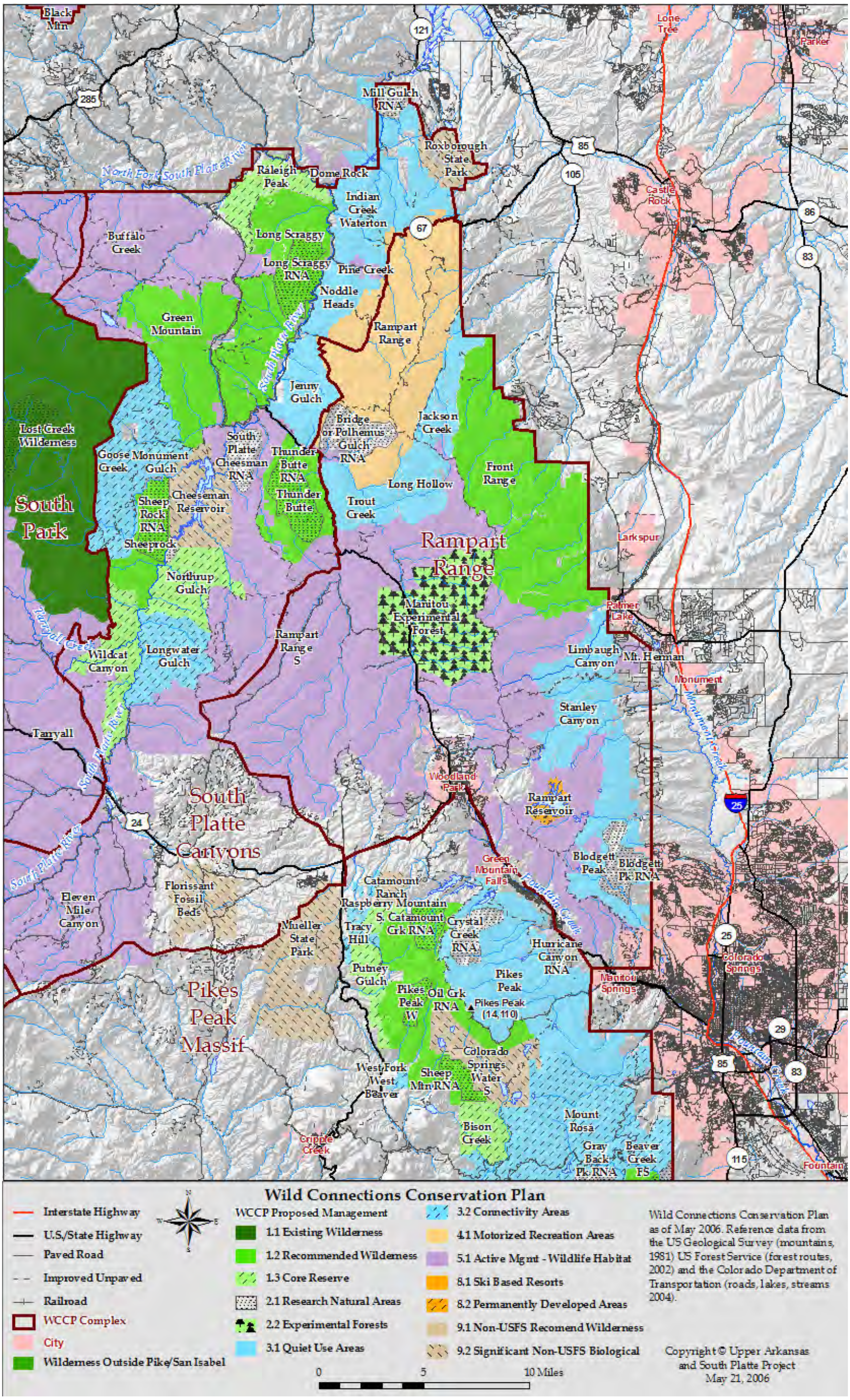
The Rampart Range Complex

Limbaugh Canyon roadless area



The Rampart Range Complex lies at the eastern edge of National Forest adjacent to the urbanized corridor and from Colorado Highway 67 south to the Ute Pass corridor.

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.


Black Mtn
285
121
Mill Gulch RNA
Roxborough State Park
85
105
Lone Tree
Parker
Castle Rock
86
83
67
North Fork South Platte River
Raleigh Peak
Dome Rock
Indian Creek Waterton
Buffalo Creek
Long Scraggy
Long Scraggy RNA
Pine Creek
Noddle Heads
Green Mountain
Rampart Range
South Platte River
Jenny Gulch
Bridge or Polhemus Gulch RNA
Jackson Creek
Lost Creek Wilderness
Goose Creek
Monument Gulch
South Platte Cheesman RNA
Thunder Butte RNA
Thunder Butte
Long Hollow
Trout Creek
Front Range
Cheeseman Reservoir
Sheep Rock RNA
Sheeprock
South Park
Rampart Range
Northrup Gulch
Larkspur
Palmer Lake
Manitou Experimental Forest
Rampart Range S
Tarryall Creek
Wildcat Canyon
Longwater Gulch
Limbaugh Canyon
Mt. Herman
Monument
Monument Creek
Stanley Canyon
Tarryall
South Platte River
Woodland Park
Rampart Reservoir
24
25
South Platte Canyons
Green Mountain Falls
Fountain Creek
Blodgett Peak
Blodgett Pk RNA
Florissant Fossil Beds
Eleven Mile Canyon
Catamount Ranch
Raspberry Mountain
S. Catamount Grk RNA
Crystal Creek RNA
Tracy Hill
Mueller State Park
Hurricane Canyon RNA
Colorado Springs
Putney Gulch
Pikes Peak
Pikes Peak W
Oil Grk RNA
Pikes Peak (14,110)
Manitou Springs
29
Fountain
West Fork West Beaver
Sheep Mtn RNA
Colorado Springs Water S
Mount Rosa
Bison Creek
Cripple Creek
Gray Back Pk RNA
Beaver Creek FS
115
Wild Connections Conservation Plan
Interstate Highway
U.S./State Highway
Paved Road
Improved Unpaved
Railroad
WCCP Complex
City
Wilderness Outside Pike/San Isabel
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 Recomend Wilderness
9.2 Significant Non-USFS Biological
0
5
10 Miles
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).
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May 21, 2006

Map 5.6: Rampart Range Complex Proposed Management

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

Description

Overview

The Rampart Range complex is the portion of Pike National Forest within the Rampart Range south of Colorado Highway 67, plus a substantial portion of similar terrain lying to the west of the Rampart Range proper, between Trout Creek and Trail Creek. More than 80% of the land within the complex is owned by the federal government, and most of the remainder is in private ownership, often in the form of inholdings of various sizes within the boundaries of the national forest.

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

Rampart Range is a moderately low elevation range of mountains running from Waterton Canyon in the north to the Ute Pass corridor in the south. The broad crest of the range comprises a relatively flat, post-Laramide erosion surface, interspersed with granite peaks and rocky outcrops, and dissected on the eastern side by several significant canyons, such as Limbaugh, Stanley, and Queens Canyons. High points along the range include Devil's Head (9,748 feet) in the north and Blodgett Peak (9,423 feet) and Ormes Peak (9,727 feet) in the south. Overall elevation ranges from approximately 6,800 feet along the eastern boundary of Pike National forest to 9,748 feet at the summit of Devils Head.

Streams along the eastern side of the range flow into Monument Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas, and the headwaters of Cherry Creek, a tributary of the South Platte. The western slope of the range is almost entirely within the South Platte drainage, with Trout Creek being the principal tributary, while the southernmost portion of the range feeds Fountain Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas. Most streams flow only a few miles before exiting the National Forest.

The Rampart Range complex lies almost entirely within the montane zone. Over 90% of its 262,900 acres is forested. The predominant vegetation is Douglas-fir intermixed with ponderosa pine, with some lodgepole pine in the central part of the complex.

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. Mule deer and elk have winter range particularly along the eastern boundary or down in the foothills outside the National Forest boundary, and bighorn sheep have winter range and lambing areas in the south. Black bear have a large area of summer and fall high activity along the National Forest edge. While the area is generally rather dry, there are many riparian areas in the canyons, and in the south there is extensive suitable habitat and occupied stream segments for Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*). Records of rare birds include Mexican spotted owl (*Strix lucida occendtalis*) American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), and ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*).

Ecological values of the complex

In addition to providing all the typical montane vegetation types to support a wide range of species, the Rampart Range includes many rich and unique biological areas. Bridge or Polhemus Gulch and

Blodgett Peak are proposed as Research Natural Areas (RNA) because of their biological values. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program lists seven Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) ranging in significance from moderate to outstanding. The Nature Conservancy's Southern Rocky Mountains Conservation blueprint (TNC blueprint) includes the northern half of the complex in its large Cheesman conservation area of moderate value. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project's Wildlands Network Vision (SREP Vision) recommends Front Range roadless areas for core wilderness and most of the rest of the complex for low use. These various conservation approaches demonstrate the ecological value of the Rampart Range complex.

Wilderness and Roadless Areas

Roadless areas contribute significantly to the biological diversity and wild character of the Rampart Range even though it is located just west of Colorado's major urbanized corridor (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Rampart Range Roadless Areas

Name	Acres (UASPP)	Roadless Under Roadless Rule
Blodgett Peak	8,000	No
Front Range	30,400	Yes
Jackson Creek	4,900	No
Jenny Gulch	6,000	Yes*
Limbaugh Canyon	4,300	No
Long Hollow	4,500	Yes*
Rampart West	16,000	Yes
Stanley Canyon	10,700	No
Trout Creek	5,100	Yes

**Roadless rule area has significantly fewer areas than UASPP inventory.*

Wilderness Areas

There are no currently designated wilderness areas in the Rampart Range complex.

Unprotected roadless areas

There are eight unprotected large roadless areas in the Rampart Range complex. Four were inventoried as roadless under the Forest Service's Roadless Area Conservation Rule, but UASPP field inventories determined that four additional areas existed, some with significant cherrystems to exclude open but little used routes. These are described from north to south.

Rampart West

The Rampart West roadless area, some 16,000 acres, lies in the northern portion of the complex. It is bounded on the east by the Rampart Range Road and Trails 649 and 650, on the south by private land in the Rainbow Park area, on the southwest by State Route 67, on the west by the power transmission line and then state 67 again. When UASPP inventoried this general vicinity, the part of the Roadless Conservation Rule Inventoried Roadless Area south of Trail 649 along Eagle and trout Creeks was split off into the Trout Creek roadless area and the part west of Trails 672, 677 and 678 was called the Jenny Gulch roadless area (in the South Platte Canyons Complex), with the remainder retaining the name of Rampart West. The redefined Rampart West roadless area has no major roads, but it is laced with the motorized trail system of the Rampart Range Recreation Area.

The northern part of the area is primarily Douglas-fir interspersed with ponderosa pine, while the south has proportionately more ponderosa pine and less Douglas-fir. There are some aspen stands along the east side, as well. The natural community of thinleaf alder/mesic forb (*Alnus incana/mesic forb*) riparian shrubland and the rare Peck sedge (*Carex peckii*) are located in this roadless area. The Hayman fire stopped in the Trout Creek area just short of the Rampart West roadless area.

In the Rampart West roadless area, there is summer range for mule deer and elk, with small areas

of deer winter range on the south and west. Mountain lion and black bear can be found in the area. Rare species include American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), Pawnee montane skipper butterfly (*Hesperia leonardus montana*), and Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*). The best habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is in the Trout Creek drainage where there are a half dozen occupied stream segments.

A Potential Conservation Area (PCA) of high significance is located on the northeast side of the area, while the whole roadless area is included in The Nature Conservancy's large Cheesman conservation area of moderate interest. Bridge or Polhemus Gulch proposed RNA, located across the south end of the area, is home for several rare species.

Jackson Creek

The 4,900-acre Jackson Creek roadless area in the Rampart Range southwest of Sedalia lies to the east of the Rampart Range Road. It is bounded on the northwest by the Jackson Creek road (forest road 507) and by the Dakan road (forest road 563) on the east. Jackson Creek is a spectacular canyon with numerous rock outcrops, and is a noted rock climbing area. Devil's Head, a well known landmark that rises above the range and can be seen for miles in all directions, is west of Jackson Creek. The terrain is rough and varied, and it is bisected by forest road 503 and motorized trail 679, effectively cutting it into several pieces. A new single-track motorcycle trail would be added as part of the recently adopted Rampart Range Recreation Area Motorized Roads and Trails Plan. Jackson Creek is visited often due to its close proximity to Denver and Front Range metro populations.

The Jackson Creek roadless area is predominantly Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine forest and has some unparalleled scenic ridge tops and wetlands, including montane willow carrs (*Salix bebiana*), as well as the rare Selkirk violet (*Viola selkirkii*). Watson Park Creek drains across the area into Jackson Creek which runs along the western boundary.

Summer range for deer across the whole Jackson Creek area and elk in the southwest end is complemented by winter range for both on the northeast end. Mountain lion and black bear find suitable habitat here. Rare animal species found in the area includes American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) and historical records of Mexican spotted owl (*Strix lucida occidentalis*).

The Devils Head at Jackson Creek PCA is of very high significance and overlaps the Jackson Creek roadless area in the pocket between forest road 503 and trail 679. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project (SREP) includes Jackson Creek as a low use area in their Vision.

Front Range

The Front Range roadless area, comprising some 30,400 acres, lies along the eastern side of the Rampart Range north of Monument Hill. It is bounded by the National Forest boundary adjacent to the gentle foothills of Perry Park on the east, by Dakan Road (forest road 563) and the Rampart Range Road on the west, and by forest road 324 on the south. The extent of the roadless area as inventoried by UASPP is larger on the north and south ends than that shown in the Roadless Area Conservation Rule Inventory.

The vegetation is predominantly Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with lodgepole pine on the crest of the range along the western boundary and some very scattered aspen and Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir. To add to the diversity there are montane riparian forests Rocky Mountain fir-

Engelmann spruce/mountain or ciliate bluebell (*Abies lasiocarpa-Picia engelmannii/Mertensia ciliata*) and strapleaf willow (*Salix eriocephala var. ligulifolia*) montane willow carrs. Other riparian species are found in Dry Gulch, Bear Creek, Plum Creek, East Plum Creek and their tributaries.

As the largest and least human-impacted area remaining along the rapidly-growing Front Range urban corridor, Front Range forms both a critical core area for wildlife and an important connecting link between plains and mountain ecosystems. Preble's meadow jumping mouse(*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) suitable habitat is found along drainages on the east side boundary, with several historical records of Preble's in the roadless area, and there are occupied segments in Bear Creek and Plum Creek just east of the roadless area. Mountain lion and black bear are in the area, with high fall activity areas for black bears along the eastern boundary. Elk have summer range across the whole area, while their wintering range is primarily on the northeast side and out into Perry Park. Mule deer also summer across the area, and winter range is located on the north east and up the Bear Creek drainage, as well as on southeast side of the roadless area around Stone and Butler Canyons. Mule deer concentrate in the foothills just east of these Rampart Range roadless areas in winter, stretching from Spruce Mountain north to the Denver suburbs. A significant linkage for elk and mountain lion migration, the I-25 Conservation Corridor, extends from the central part of this roadless area, running eastward north of Larkspur. Other rare species documented in the area are American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) and Mexican spotted owl (*Strix lucida occidentalis*).

The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project's Vision lists all of Front Range roadless area as core wilderness.

Long Hollow

The Long Hollow roadless area of 4,500 acres is located to the west of the Rampart Range Road about five miles south of Devils' Head. It is bounded by the Rampart Range Road and the Long Hollow road (forest road 348) on the east and is separated from Trout Creek roadless area to the west by a motorized OHV trail (forest route 650).

The area is predominantly Douglas-fir forest, with ponderosa pine on hotter, drier slopes and some aspen in drainages on the north side. Long Hollow Creek, a tributary of Trout Creek, drains the area.

Mule deer have a small wintering area on the southeast side of the Long Hollow roadless area, in addition to summer range across the whole area for both deer and elk. Mountain lion and black bear are found in the area, as well.

Long Hollow is part of SREP Vision's large area of low use that extends south to the National Forest boundary.

Trout Creek

The Trout Creek roadless area, some 5,100 acres, lies east of Colorado Highway 67, approximately 15 miles north of Woodland Park. It is centered upon Trout Creek, a large tributary of the South Platte River draining most of the west slope of the Rampart Range. It is bounded by trail 649 on the north, which follows Eagle and Trout Creeks, Colorado Highway 67 on the west, and by substantial private inholdings on the south, and is separated from the Long Hollow roadless area to the east by a motorized OHV trail (forest route 650). Trout Creek, which flows northwards across the area provides fishing opportunities.

The Trout Creek roadless area is a mix of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with aspen and other riparian species on the north boundary along Eagle and Trout Creeks. The 2002 Hayman Fire burned with low to moderate severity west of Trout Creek, but was contained in the wet areas of Trout Creek.

The most notable rare species here is the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), which has extensive suitable habitat in the Trout Creek drainage through the center of the area and in West Creek tributaries on the western edge of the area. There are eight occupied segments within the roadless area, with others in the Rampart West roadless area and a large nexus of occupied segments about three miles southeast of the Trout Creek roadless area near the confluence of Missouri Gulch and Trout Creek. Like most of the other roadless areas in this part of the complex, there is summer range for mule deer and elk, and there is a large elk and mule deer winter range along Trout Creek just south of the roadless area. Mountain lion and black bear also are found here.

All of Trout Creek is included in TNC's large Cheesman conservation area of moderate significance, and SREP's Vision shows the roadless area as part of the large area of low use that extends south to the Forest boundary.

Limbaugh Canyon

The Limbaugh Canyon roadless area of some 4,300 acres is on the edge of the National Forest not far west of Palmer Lake and Monument Creek flows through the rugged Limbaugh Canyon in the center of the area. The Mount Herman Road (forest road 320) is the south and southeast boundary; private lands define the northeast boundary, and forest roads 322 and 320D make up the north and west boundaries.

The vegetation in the Limbaugh Canyon roadless area is primarily Douglas-fir forest, particularly on its cooler northern slopes, but the area also contains some ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and mountain scrub on drier south facing slopes. The area includes riparian areas with beaver dams and some areas of aspen forest.

The roadless area is currently managed by the Forest Service as a sensitive wildlife area with year-round restrictions on off-road vehicular recreation, including a ban on winter snowmobile use. A large area of high activity for black bears in both summer and fall extends from Limbaugh Canyon roadless area south to Pikes Peak along the edge of the National Forest. Elk and mule deer have summer range in this area, and there is winter range for deer on the east below the steep slopes. There is some suitable habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) on the eastern edge of the area, with many occupied stream segments out in the valley in Monument Creek and its small tributaries.

The SREP Vision shows the Limbaugh Canyon roadless area as low use.

Stanley Canyon

The Stanley Canyon roadless area is a large roadless area of nearly 11,000 acres along the edge of the National Forest. Located north and east of Rampart Reservoir and west of the Air Force Academy, it is bounded on the north by the Mount Herman Road, on the east by the Pike National Forest boundary, on the south by forest road 303A and West Monument Creek, and on the west by a complex network of motorized trails and by private inholdings. Two substantial cherrystem roads, forest roads 318 and 311, extend into the area from the west to a mile or less from its eastern boundary.

Elevations within the area range from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. The area includes several deep and rocky canyons including Stanley Canyon and West Monument Creek on its southern boundary, both noted for their spectacular scenery. Public access to the Stanley Canyon and West Monument Creek trails is permitted across the Air Force Academy grounds, but is subject to Academy restrictions and closure periods.

The northern portion of the Stanley Canyon roadless area is a mix of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, with some small areas of aspen, as well as some mountain shrubland on the east side. The southern half is almost all Douglas-fir, but there are several locations of mountain shrubland along the eastern boundary. Two rare plants - Porter feathergrass (*Ptilagrostis porteri*) and Richardson alum-root (*Heuchera richardsonii*) have been recorded in Stanley Canyon. In addition to West Monument Creek on the south, a creek drains the northern portion, and Stanley Canyon and Reservoir No. 2 are located in the center of the area, providing additional biodiversity.

The Stanley Canyon roadless area is an important location for Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) with approximately 15 occupied stream segments and many documented animals here and in the Blodgett Peak roadless area to the south. To the east Monument Creek has many occupied segments in the main stream and many small tributaries. Two rare birds species have also been recorded here, the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) and ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*). More common animals are like those found in all these roadless areas along the National Forest edge in the complex. There is black bear high activity in both summer and fall, elk use the area in the summer with a high concentration of animals on the Air Force Academy grounds in the winter, and mule deer follow a similar pattern. More unusual in this complex are the bighorn sheep which are located primarily further south, but have a lambing area on the south end of the Stanley Canyon area in the West Monument Creek Canyon.

TNC's very large Piles Peak area of moderate conservation value overlaps into the southern part of the Stanley Canyon roadless area, and the Monument Creek PCA of very high significance also overlaps the southeastern corner of the area. SREP's Vision shows the Stanley Canyon roadless area as a low use area.

Blodgett Peak

Blodgett Peak is a roadless area of some 8,000 acres in the Rampart Range east of Rampart Reservoir and west of the Air Force Academy. It is bounded by West Monument Creek on the north, by the Pike National Forest boundary on the east, by the Rampart Range Road on the south, and by private inholdings and forest road 303 on the west. Elevations within the area range from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. The area contains several deep and rocky canyons, including Queens Canyon and West Monument Creek Canyon, on its northern boundary, both noted for their spectacular scenery. Access to West Monument Creek is possible across the Air Force Academy grounds, but is subject to Academy restrictions and closure periods.

The Blodgett Peak roadless area is primarily Douglas-fir with small areas of ponderosa pine and mountain shrubland.

Blodgett Peak is noted for its wildlife values, including bighorn sheep winter range and two production areas and contains habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) and Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*). Preble's meadow jumping mouse suitable habitat is found in the drainages all along the eastern edge and in B Creek, and there are some occupied segments in West Monument Creek. Elk are confined to the less rugged

northwest part, but mule deer use the whole area in summer, and both have winter range with significant concentrations of animals to the east on the Air Force Academy grounds. There is black bear high activity in both summer and fall, and mountain lion can be found here.

TNC's very large Piles Peak area of moderate conservation value covers the whole Blodgett Peak roadless area, and the Monument Creek PCA of very high significance also intersects the north eastern corner of the area. SREP's Vision shows the Blodgett Peak roadless area as a low use area. Blodgett Peak proposed RNA is located across the eastern half of the roadless area.

Historical and Cultural Features of Rampart Range

Some archeological, historical and cultural features include:

- In July, 1802 Major Stephen H. Long traveled along the edge of the Rampart Range on his way from the South Platte towards the Arkansas River.
- The nation's first US forest ranger was William "Billy" Kreutzer who patrolled the Plum Creek Timber Reserve between the Palmer divide and the South Platte. Raised on a ranch west of Sedalia, his job was to put out forest fires, stop unauthorized logging, and encourage local ranchers to comply with the government's management of grazing on public lands.
- Most of the human activity of the 1800s and 1900s took place in the valleys just to the east of the Rampart Range, including settlement of Castle Rock, Perry Park, Palmer Lake and Monument. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad narrow gauge railroad featured engines built to the specifications of General William Jackson Palmer. They were reputed to be small, but very powerful. William Walk, the engineer of the 12.5 ton Montezuma, said his engine was so well balanced that even a glass of water set in the windows did not lose a drop of water. However, a very strong Chinook wind blew her off the siding near Monument one July day in 1871.
- The Rampart Range Road was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is a gravel-surfaced road passable to standard vehicles that runs 60 miles along the crest of the Rampart Range south from Route 67 to Woodland Park, then east to Rampart Reservoir and, as a rougher road more suitable to high-clearance vehicles, beyond the National Forest Boundary to Garden of the Gods Park in Colorado Springs. Devils Head, a massive rock outcrop on the crest of the range is a popular spot for visitors to climb the fire tower for a 360 degree view of the plains to the east and mountains to the west.
- The Air Force Academy was sited at the foothills of the Rampart Range near Colorado Springs in 1954.
- The Colorado Highway 67 corridor from Woodland Park northward to Manitou Lake is an area heavily used for recreation, primarily for camping at several National Forest campgrounds and fishing in the lake. A paved foot and bicycle trail, the Manitou Park Bike Trail parallels this portion of the highway.

Management Recommendations

Overview

Because of the ecological value of protecting large roadless areas, the Wild Connections team recommends new Wilderness designation (Theme 1) for the largest remaining roadless area in the Rampart Range complex. Two areas are proposed RNAs (Theme 2). All but one of the remaining roadless areas is recommended for quiet use management (Theme 3). The roadless area adjacent to the Rampart Range Motorized Recreation area is recommended as a recreation emphasis area (Theme 4). Two large, substantially roaded areas are recommended for active management for wildlife habitat (Theme 5). There is also a permanently developed recreation areas (Theme 8) at Rampart Reservoir. 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 the statutory restrictions on activities in designated or proposed Wilderness areas. Table 5.11 lists the major management units by theme. Refer to the Rampart Range Complex map for specific locations and read roadless area descriptions above for more details on the unit.

Table 5.11: Rampart Range Management Recommendations

Name	Acres	Recommended Management
Theme 1 – Natural Processes Dominate		
Front Range	30,400	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Theme 2 – Special Areas		
Blodgett Peak RNA	3,100	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Bridge or Polhemus Gulch RNA	3,500	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Manitou Experimental Forest	16,300	2.2 Experimental Forests
Theme 3 – Natural Landscapes with Limited Management		
Blodgett Peak	4,900	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Jackson Creek	4,900	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Limbaugh Canyon	4,300	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Long Hollow	4,500	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Stanley Canyon	10,700	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Trout Creek	5,100	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Theme 4 – Recreation Emphasis Areas		
Rampart Range (also in South Platte Canyons)	31,600	4.1 Motorized Recreation Areas
Theme 5 – Active Management		
Mount Herman	1,100	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Rampart Range South(also in South Platte Canyons)	132,400	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Theme 8 – Permanently Developed Areas		
Rampart Reservoir	1,600	8.2 Permanently Developed Recreation Areas

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 Front Range roadless area is recommended for Wilderness designation. The area is described in detail in the roadless area descriptions above. The proposed Wilderness boundary is essentially the same as the UASPP roadless boundary. In making this recommendation we considered the value of 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.

We believe that the proposed wilderness area meets the capability, availability and suitability criteria of the Wilderness Act and Forest Service Wilderness Handbook. These are discussed below, with

notations as to particular values or potential conflicts.

Capability

The proposed Front Range Wilderness meets the capability requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 for designation. Despite its proximity to the rapidly-growing Front Range urban corridor, the area provides opportunities for solitude, challenge and unconfined recreation once the trailheads are left behind. The rugged eastern slope of the Rampart Range includes craggy peaks and deep, often trail-less canyons and valleys. The imprints of humans are substantially unnoticeable. Although portions of the Front Range roadless area were logged during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century, the forest has since grown back into a mature forest, and old logging roads are recovering, leaving little overt evidence of these activities. While some prospecting also took place in the area during this same period, evidence of this activity is also slowly disappearing. Care has been taken to exclude old access roads that have received substantial, recent motorized recreational use. Although portions of the Front Range roadless area have been heavily impacted by past human activities, the regeneration and rehabilitation of this area has largely been left to nature, and can continue to do so, furnishing a useful means of comparison between natural and human-assisted processes. It offers a unique opportunity for visitors to experience solitude and a low-elevation ecosystem largely devoid of human impacts.

Availability

The proposed Front Range Wilderness has no known impediments. It contains no active mines or timber stands suitable to and proposed for logging. The watersheds and streams are already allocated, and no new water projects are planned

Major highways are not anticipated to affect the area. The Rampart Range Road lies to the west of the proposed Wilderness, and increased use of this road will increase visitation and bring pressure to bear on the adjoining Wilderness. The proposed Wilderness boundary was drawn to exclude roads connecting the Rampart Range road to the urban corridor to the east.

The proposed Wilderness is not appropriate for timber harvest, with steep canyons and heavy recreation use just to the west. The vegetation within the area is largely intact with some of it tending toward mature and old growth characteristics. There are no grazing allotments. Overall, there are no known or anticipated threats to the area that would preclude its designation as Wilderness.

Suitability

The main uses that would be forgone in newly designated Wilderness are motorized recreation on illegal roads and off-highway vehicle and snowmobile use off currently designated routes. Although most of the proposed Wilderness is currently designated for snowmobile use, the low elevation and consequent lack of snowfall make the Rampart Range proposed Wilderness marginal for this form of recreation. Motorized recreation will continue to be a major use of National Forest land in this complex, and is a factor which only calls for greater and more permanent protection of those areas which presently are not heavily impacted by this activity. The motorized trail network in the vicinity of the perimeters of the proposed Wilderness is adequate to allow long-distance motorized recreational travel. Roads within the complex, including particularly Colorado Highway 67 and the Rampart Range Road, together with the network of Forest roads leading off of them are adequate to provide motorized access within the complex, and designation of the proposed Wilderness, by the nature of its location and terrain, will not impede vehicular travel within the complex, but will provide badly-needed protection from off-road vehicular use.

Wilderness designation would result in some restrictions on implementation of potential fuels reduction projects. However, recent experience in the aftermath of the 2002 Hayman Fire shows that methodologies which are permitted within designated wildernesses, such as controlled burns, are at least as effective in preventing destructive crown fires as means that are not permitted such as mechanical thinning, as well as being more cost-effective.

There are numerous ecological values that support the designation of the Front Range Wilderness:

- The area comprises lower elevation montane ecosystems, which are poorly represented within the existing system of designated wildernesses, both within Pike/San Isabel National Forests and within Colorado National Forests as a whole.
- Significant wetlands and riparian areas
- This proposed Wilderness will preserve habitat necessary to protect a number of species which require isolation and undisturbed habitat such as the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*).
- Domestic and municipal water supplies would be protected from erosion associated with motorized routes.
- There are outstanding opportunities for solitude, quiet backcountry recreation and challenge within the proposed Wilderness area.
- Existing, intensive motorized recreation and motorized routes within the complex would not be adversely affected, and the considerable ecological impacts of this intensive recreational use would to some degree be mitigated by protection of presently unimpacted areas.
- Designation of wilderness within this complex would help ensure that the adverse impacts caused by habitat fragmentation by roads, damage to riparian zones, loss of old-growth forests, fire, and intensive recreation would be mitigated.
- Maintaining a portion of this complex in its natural state would protect the scenic and environmental values which draw recreationists of all types to the Rampart Range, and which draw tourists and new residents to Colorado.
- Local economies will be enhanced by the designation of a Wilderness area by increasing the spectrum of available types of recreation.

Theme 2 – Special Areas

Theme 2 areas are managed to protect or enhance areas with unusual characteristics, including Research Natural Areas, special biological or geological areas, cultural/historical areas or other special designations.

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 increase the ecosystem representation, Blodgett Peak and Bridge or Polhemus Gulch are recommended for addition to the RNA system. Each has its unique combination of ecological values which will enhance the system:

- Blodgett Peak, some 3,100 acres, is located in the southern Rampart Range a short distance northwest of Colorado Springs. It is primarily Douglas-fir forest, together with ponderosa pine and hillside oak scrub, and noted for its wildlife values, including bighorn sheep winter

range and production areas. There are numerous recorded occurrences of Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) in the area, as well as occurrences of Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*). The area contains some interesting geological features.

- Bridge or Polhemus Gulch, some 3,500 acres, located east of Deckers and west of the Rampart Range Road in the northwestern portion of the Rampart Range, is primarily low-elevation mixed-conifer forest. A population of Preble's meadow jumping mice (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) is located in the vicinity of Trout Creek. There are records of Pawnee montane skipper butterflies (*Hesperia leonardus montana*) in the area and also occurrences of Mexican spotted owl (*Strix lucida occidentalis*). Polhemus Gulch was the site of the largest prescribed burn ever in Colorado and illustrates the effectiveness of such mitigation measures in the wake of a large wildfire, the 2002 Hayman burn.

Theme 2.2 – Experimental Forests
Experimental Forests provide lands for management-based research that serves as the basis for management of forest and rangelands. Established Experimental Forests are managed according to specific plans

The existing Manitou Experimental Forest is the only experimental forest in the Pike-San Isabel. Established in 1936, this is one of the oldest experimental forests in the country, and has been used to conduct long-term studies of the flammulated owl, watersheds, and the ponderosa pine ecosystem, and as a site for the Colorado Front Range Ecosystem Management Project.

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 3.1 – Quiet Use Areas
Management emphasizes non-motorized recreation opportunities in a natural or natural-appearing landscape with little or no evidence of recent human-caused disturbance.

Limbaugh Canyon, Stanley Canyon, and the portions of Blodgett Peak not included in the proposed RNA, in the southern part of the Rampart Range are recommended for quiet use and non motorized recreation. This designation will preserve the roadless and non-motorized character of the southeastern part of the complex while allowing quiet recreation including mountain bike use on trails branching off of the Rampart Range Road in the vicinity of Rampart Reservoir and northward.

Also recommended for Quiet Use designation are Jackson Creek, Long Hollow, and Trout Creek. This designation recognizes the intensive recreational use of the Rampart Range and the need for areas suitable for nonmotorized recreation such as hiking and mountain biking, thereby providing a broader spectrum of recreational experience while protecting wildlife habitat from already considerable environmental impact of motorized recreation within the complex. Much of the area surrounding the existing Rampart Range Motorized Recreation Area is therefore recommended to be designated as nonmotorized, quiet use recreation areas. Adjustments may need to be made in the boundaries to accommodate motorized use designated in recent travel management plans.

Theme 4 – Recreation Emphasis Areas
Lands in Theme 4 are managed to emphasize recreation opportunities and scenery values. These areas are typically centered on recreational destinations, transportation corridors, winter snow play areas,

and near bodies of water. Motorized uses are common and include trails and roads.

Theme 4.1 – Motorized Recreation Areas

Management emphasis is for dispersed and/or concentrated motorized recreation, restricted to designated motorized routes, and concentrated recreation on and near water bodies.

A substantial portion of the Rampart Range is currently devoted to seasonal and year-round motorized recreation, with approximately 150 miles of motorized trails located within the 91,000-acre Rampart Range Motorized Recreation Area, and motorized trail connections to other portions of the National Forest. It is a popular recreation site for off-highway vehicle enthusiasts and camping. The area is bisected by the Rampart Range Road, which is used extensively for road-based recreational activities, particularly in the vicinity of the historic Devil's Head lookout tower. We recommend that this use continue within the Rampart Range unit that encompasses most of the Rampart Range Road, the Rampart West roadless area, and the currently designated connecting routes. The Rampart Range West roadless area falls within the Rampart Range unit, and we strongly recommend that all roadless lands be managed under the provisions of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule with additional guidance from the management objectives and guidelines of this theme.

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.

Much of the National Forest in the southern part of the complex, land north and west of Woodland Park, and southeastward along the southernmost portion of the Rampart Range, with road densities ranging from low to high, is recommended for active management for wildlife habitat. This portion of the National Forest contains numerous motorized routes and trails, including concentrations of motorized trails in the Rainbow Falls OHV area and the North Divide OHV area, located north of the town of Divide and west of Colorado Highway 67. These areas are connected by motorized routes to the Rampart Range Motorized Recreation Area (Theme 4.1). The small Mount Herman area east of Limbaugh Canyon is also within this theme. Consideration should be given to the sensitive wildlife areas: deer fawning, elk calving, and bighorn sheep lambing areas, winter range for ungulates, and accommodation of larger carnivores such as mountain lion.
Also recommended for this classification is the Mount Herman area, a small 1,100-acre area to the east of Limbaugh Canyon containing the Monument Fire Center and adjacent Memorial Grove, an area including a memorial grove of trees, signs, plaques, a picnic area, and other related facilities. This area includes the base for an Interagency Hotshot fire crew, but also contains a number of popular hiking and mountain biking trails, surrounded on three sides by rapidly-developing private land.

Theme 8 – Permanently Developed Areas

These areas are permanently altered by human activities to the extent ecological conditions and landscape appearances are likely outside their natural range of variability. Management emphasis is

generally for highly developed recreation sites, campgrounds, utility corridors, or mineral development areas.

Theme 8.2 – Permanently Developed Recreation Areas
These areas contain developed recreation sites that provide an array of recreational opportunities and experiences, usually in a forested environment.

Rampart Reservoir is a heavily used recreation area in the southern part of the Rampart Range, a few miles east of Woodland Park. In addition to water-based recreational activities, the area around its 10-mile shoreline is used for picnicking, camping, hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing. Management will include practices and restrictions designed to protect water quality.

Connectivity

Maintaining connections between protected core areas and other areas of particular biological significance is an important aspect of our conservation perspective. The Rampart Range lies between the South Platte Canyons Complex to the west, the Front Range urban corridor to the east, and the Pikes Peak Massif to the south, within a region that has experienced heavy human impacts, past and present, and can be expected to see even greater human impacts in future years. Roads and motorized routes and trails within the complex already pose a substantial barrier to wildlife movement, creating a significantly fragmented landscape.

Connections between the Rampart Range Complex and the South Platte Canyons are fairly good; the chief barrier to wildlife movement to the west being Colorado Highway 67, a heavily-traveled road running from Woodland Park northward. To the east, except for a few public parks, isolated parcels of State land, and the Air Force Academy, the entire urban corridor is in private ownership. Uses vary between ranching and residential use, with the latter increasing in significance, particularly between Castle Rock and Monument Hill. A conservation easement covering approximately 9,000 acres protects the Greenland Ranch area north of Monument Hill, and allows wildlife movement several miles eastward. With increasing residential development in this corridor, preservation of wildlife migration routes is a problem. The Forest Service should work with the Air Force Academy to jointly maintain connectivity across the interface between the National Forest and Academy grounds, since this area includes wildlife migration routes and habitat for both Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) and Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*).

To the south, the Ute Pass corridor, separating the Rampart Range from the Pikes Peak Massif, is almost entirely residential, except for a 3-mile segment between Manitou Springs and Cascade. US Highway 24, a four-lane highway, bisects the corridor and constitutes a major barrier to wildlife movement. Establishment and maintenance of wildlife crossings across this corridor are important.

Summary

The Rampart Range complex offers a unique opportunity within the Pike-San Isabel National Forest to integrate intensive recreational use of an area near a growing urban corridor with long-term preservation of the environment, and to do this on a broad, ecosystem-wide basis. Identification and protection of unique and critical areas and the providing of protected linkages between these areas can best accommodate increasing human population and recreational pressure while minimizing impacts to the natural environment. By emphasizing the integrity of the ecosystem and focusing on the protection of its most sensitive components, a network of wildlands can be created that will sustain the integrity of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest, now and in the foreseeable future.