

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.

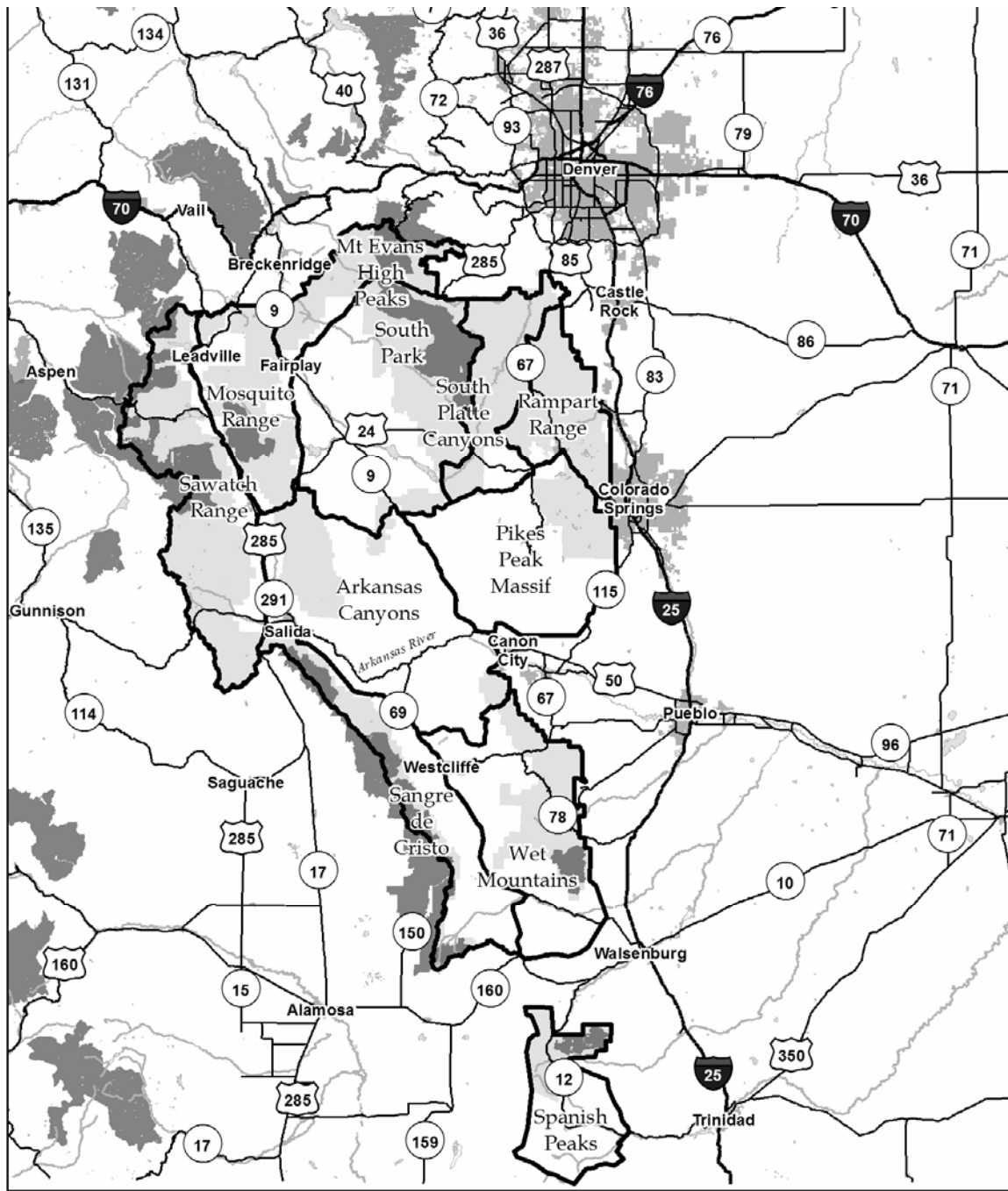
Complexes – Summary List by Watershed

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
- 0 25 50 Miles

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).

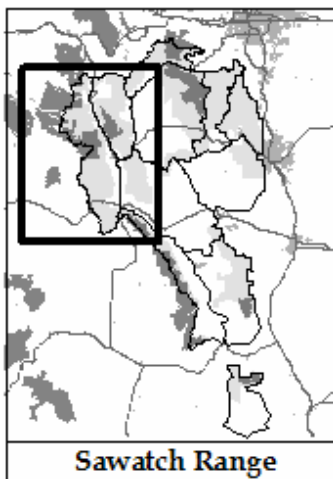


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The Sawatch Range Complex

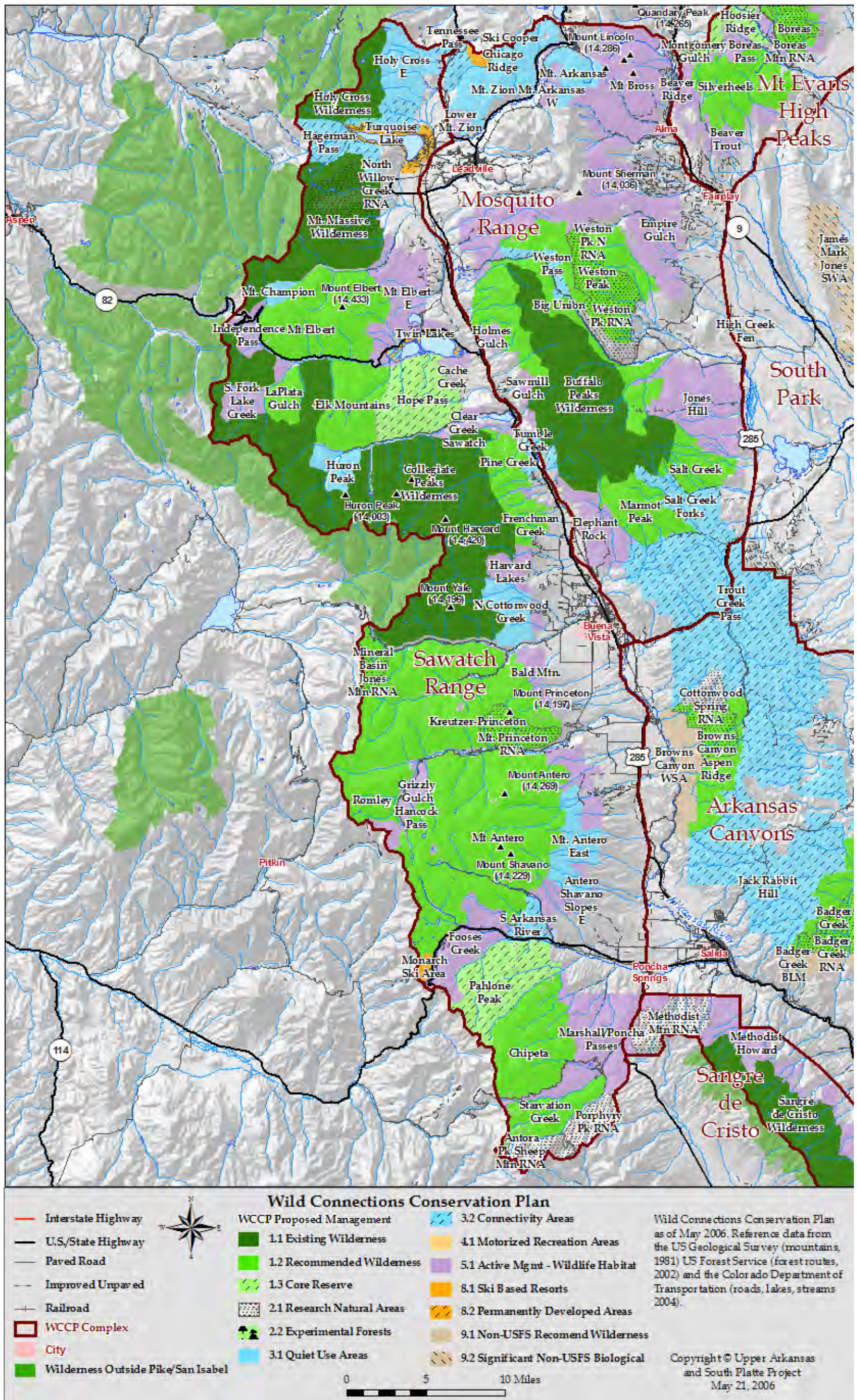


Collegiate Peaks Wilderness



The Sawatch Range is located west of the Arkansas River from the Cochetopa Hills in the south to the Holy Cross Wilderness in the north and is noted for its Fourteeners.

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



Map 5.8: Sawatch Range Complex Proposed Management

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

Description

Overview

The Sawatch Range is located west of the Arkansas River from the Cochetopa Hills in the south to the Holy Cross Wilderness in the north. The Fourteeners all lie to the east of the crest of the range and, except for Mount of the Holy Cross, are all located in San Isabel National Forest. The Sawatch complex encompasses the part of the range that is located south and east of the Continental Divide. The complex is located primarily in Chaffee and Lake Counties, with a small portion in Saguache County at the southern end of the range.

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

The Sawatch Range is the highest range in Colorado, including not only the highest peak in the state, Mount Elbert, but also the second, third, and fifth highest. It contains more 14,000-foot peaks than any other single range in the contiguous United States, a total of fourteen named peaks. From Chalk Creek north to Hagerman Pass, a distance of approximately sixty miles, the crest never descends below 12,000 feet. At its southern end, the mountain range merges with the Cochetopa Hills – the lowest elevation on the Continental Divide in Colorado, a mountain range trending toward the southwest for nearly eighty miles to merge with the San Juan mountain region. Across Poncha Pass, the Sawatch Range merges with the Sangre de Cristo range, a narrow band of mountains extending more than two hundred miles into New Mexico.

The complex is drained by a number of streams running eastward from the Continental Divide to the Arkansas River, including Lake Fork of the Arkansas River, Lake Creek, Clear Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Chalk Creek, the South Arkansas River, and Poncha Creek, dividing the complex into a series of east-west running mountain ridges separated by deep valleys. Elevations range from over 14,000 feet to below 8,000 feet along the eastern National Forest boundary.

Vegetation within the Sawatch Complex extends across several life zones, from piñon-juniper and foothills grassland through ponderosa pine to higher elevation types. However, much of the area, especially within the designated wildernesses, is alpine tundra or barren rock, and most of the remainder is either Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir or lodgepole pine forest. Aspen occurs occasionally and in some locations forms large stands, as does bristlecone and limber pine. Douglas-fir is common only in the southernmost part of the complex. There are extensive lakes, riparian areas and wetlands across the complex at all elevations, and as the complex extends into private lands in the valley, there are the aquatic and riparian zones along the Arkansas River. Overall approximately 33 percent of the total acreage is lodgepole pine forest, 21 percent is alpine tundra, 16 percent is barren rock and about 13 percent is Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, demonstrating the vegetation characteristics of the very high elevations.

The Sawatch Range contains habitat for a large range of species, including predators such as mountain lion, lynx, bobcat, coyote, and pine marten; omnivores such as black bear; a variety of

raptors; and numerous herbivores, including big-game species, mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep, which have critical winter range located along the lower margins of the National Forest. The eastern boundary of the large Sawatch complex generally follows the Arkansas River, and this low elevation valley bottom provides substantial elk winter range throughout, with major migration corridors north of the central Collegiate Peaks area, and winter range and migration corridors for pronghorn from the central Collegiate Peaks area south. Mountain goats, an introduced non-native species, are also found here. Other current and historical rare and sensitive species include boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*), American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*), and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), together with many plant species and natural communities.

Although the Sawatch complex includes three designated wildernesses, it has many other equally high, remote, untouched, and beautiful areas that are not permanently protected.

Ecological values of the complex

The high valleys and ridges of the Sawatch Range provide refuge for many species of animals, while its slopes provide a nearly continuous belt of forest through which wildlife can migrate. Lynx, recently reestablished in Colorado, have made the Sawatch Range one of their two prime ranges, with extensive recent records from radio collared animals, and there are a number of high priority linkages along the mountain range and into adjacent forests. In addition, the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Projects' analysis has shown the value of the complex for secondary wolf habitat across the Wilderness areas between Cottonwood Pass and Monarch Pass, and potential effective linkages across Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass connecting to the Sangre de Cristo Range for wolves, black bears and lynx. (Miller et al, 2003, SREP, 2005).

The Colorado Natural Heritage Program lists 20 Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) – most of them in roadless areas - ranging from moderate to outstanding biodiversity significance, and the area also contains five proposed Research Natural Areas (RNA). The Nature Conservancy's Southern Rocky Mountains Conservation blueprint (TNC blueprint) has a very large area of moderate biodiversity significance that extends from Browns Canyon and Buena Vista westward across Cottonwood Pass and the nearby mountains to Taylor Park and the East River in the Gunnison National Forest. The South Arkansas is another sizeable area of moderate biodiversity significance. An area of moderately low biodiversity is located in the south from Mount Antero to the Arkansas River. In general the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project's Wildlands Network Vision (SREP's Vision) shows most of the Sawatch Range as core areas, interspersed with wildlife linkages and low use areas.

The ecological values of the Sawatch complex can be summarized as providing extensive alpine and high elevation ecosystems with a full complement of most native species, a number of rare and imperiled species and excellent linkages for ungulates and major predators. The large amount of roadless lands in the complex not only protect these values, but provide major ecosystem services of clean water, clean air and nutrient recycling.

Wilderness and Roadless Areas and Wilderness

The Sawatch complex contains three designated Wildernesses, as well as 14 roadless areas that exhibit many wild qualities and biological values that if given protective management will result in ecological characteristics that are best found where the presence of people is minimized. (See Table 5.14). The areas are described from north to south below.

Table 5.14: Sawatch Range Roadless Areas

Wilderness Areas

Holy Cross Wilderness

Holy Cross Wilderness totaling 122,600 acres lies largely in the adjoining White River National Forest, but a significant portion of the wilderness – 9,000 acres - is in the Sawatch complex of the San Isabel National Forest. The portion of Holy Cross Wilderness in the San Isabel National Forest is primarily Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir or tundra. Vegetation is lodgepole pine on the east with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir on the west, interspersed with some montane meadows, mountain shrubland and wetlands.

Elk, mountain goats and bighorn sheep summer ranges are located within the Wilderness, with some elk summer concentration areas and a small migration corridor in the south east side. Mountain lion and black bear are found in suitable habitat. SREP identifies Lake Fork Creek above Turquoise Lake as a significant watershed for greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*). There is some lynx habitat on the south side of the Wilderness, and radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the Wilderness. A high priority linkage for lynx extends from the Holy Cross Wilderness in the White River National Forest eastward into the Mosquito Range Complex by way of Tennessee Pass.

Mount Massive Wilderness

Mount Massive Wilderness totaling 30,500 acres lies entirely within San Isabel National Forest, and shares its western boundary with the Hunter-Fryingpan Wilderness in the White River National Forest. Mount Massive Wilderness also includes 2,600 acres of federal lands within the Leadville Federal Fish Hatchery, the only federal land in Colorado within a designated wilderness which is administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Wilderness is an area of high, extensively glaciated ridges and peaks, and includes Mount Massive, the second-highest peak in the state, together with valleys containing glacial features such as cirques, tarns, paternoster lakes and kettle ponds.

The area contains extensive lodgepole pine forests, the result of series of fires which destroyed the previous coniferous forest between 125 and 175 years ago, as well as Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir and alpine tundra and wetlands.

Elk, mule deer, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep all have summer range across most of the Wilderness, with a large mountain goat production area on the south. There is an elk calving area on the east side south of the fish hatchery and two elk migration corridors, one on the north side in the Buck Creek area and another on the east side just outside the Wilderness that runs north-

Name	Acres (UASPP)	Roadless Under Roadless Rule
Antora Peak	3,800	Yes
Chipeta	33,700	Yes
Collegiate Peaks Wilderness	167,400	n/a**
Elk Mountains	24,800	Yes
Frenchman Creek	2,500	No
Holy Cross E	7,600	Yes
Holy Cross Wilderness	122,900	n/a**
Kreutzer-Princeton	50,200	Yes
La Plata Gulch	4,000	Yes
Mount Antero	66,800	Yes*
Mount Elbert	22,700	Yes
Mount Massive Wilderness	30,500	n/a
North Cottonwood Creek	5,700	Yes
Pine Creek	6,900	Yes*
Porphyry	3,500	Yes
Romley	8,600	Yes
Starvation Creek	7,600	Yes

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

**Includes lands in an adjacent National Forest.

south parallel to the Arkansas River. Mountain lion and black bear are found in the Wilderness, and there is a broad swath of lynx general, winter and denning habitat along the whole east side. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the Wilderness.

Mount Massive Wilderness includes the North Willow Creek proposed RNA, which is noted for its outstanding and varied subalpine wetlands and forested areas, as well as a reintroduced population of Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*). SREP identifies the Rock Creek drainage as a significant area for Greenback cutthroat trout. Two PCAs of very high biodiversity significance are located on Mount Massive and Twining Peak, with one of general biodiversity interest along Halfmoon Creek. TNC's Conservation Portfolio shows an area of very high conservation significance located on the tundra of Mount Massive itself and a small general biodiversity area on the south boundary along Halfmoon Creek.

Collegiate Peaks Wilderness

Collegiate Peaks Wilderness totaling 167,400 acres is one of the ten largest Wildernesses in Colorado. With eight Fourteeners, including Mount Oxford, Harvard, Mount Columbia and Mount Yale, and another half-dozen above 13,800 feet, it has more high peaks than any other Wilderness in the lower 48 states. Approximately half its acreage lies west of the Continental Divide, in the White River National Forest, while 82,000 acres in the San Isabel National Forest in the Sawatch Range Complex. Its wide U-shaped valleys, cirques, alpine lakes and rocky precipitous slopes are a legacy of long-ago glaciations. The lower elevations form a green ring of thick forests and riparian areas.

Like the other high Wildernesses in the Sawatch Range, much of Collegiate Peaks' vegetation is dominated by alpine tundra and wetlands. Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir can be found in the areas around the edges and in the river valleys. There is some lodgepole pine on the east and south, with aspen scattered along the lower boundaries and some scattered stands of bristlecone/limber pine.

Deer and elk can be found in appropriate habitat across the whole wilderness in summer, but winter habitat is located to the east in the Arkansas Valley. An arm of the large elk migration corridor in the Arkansas Valley extends up the Clear Creek drainage nearly to the headwaters. Some of the valley calving areas extend into the Wilderness on the east side. There is summer range across the Wilderness for bighorn sheep, with some winter range on the east slopes of Mount Yale, and there are significant lambing areas in the Mount Oxford and Mount Yale-Turner Peak areas. There is mountain goat summer range with several concentration and production areas. Headwaters areas above La Plata and Sayers Gulches are listed by SREP as a significant watershed for greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*). Mountain lion and black bear are found here. While lynx habitat is scattered along the lower elevations on the north, east, and south, the Forest Service identified a linkage for lynx that goes westward from the Wilderness across Cottonwood Pass and into the White River National Forest, coinciding with SREP's high priority linkage. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the area. In addition, SREP has identified other lower priority linkages eastward across the Pine Creek roadless area to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness in the Mosquito Range complex and south from the Wilderness into the Kreutzer-Princeton roadless area.

Collegiate Peaks Wilderness has several areas of biodiversity, including locations in Silver Basin, and La Plata Basin that exhibit good landscape integrity and some rare plant species. There are five PCAs – two of very high biodiversity significance at Huron Peak and Missouri Mountain, and one each of high (Mount Harvard), moderate (Denny Creek) and general (Mount Belford) biodiversity significance scattered across the eastern part of the Wilderness. The south and central

portion of the Wilderness is part of TNC's Conservation Portfolio. The Cottonwood Pass area is of moderate conservation value.

Unprotected roadless areas

There are fourteen unprotected large roadless areas in the Sawatch complex, including several that are contiguous with existing Wildernesses. All except Frenchman Creek were inventoried as roadless under the Forest Service's Roadless Area Conservation Rule; however, UASPP field inventories determined that some areas were significantly larger than the Roadless Area Conservation Rule boundaries. In addition to their value as roadless areas, four of these areas also include recommendations for RNAs. These areas are described from north to south below.

Holy Cross East

The Holy Cross East roadless area is directly adjacent to the designated Holy Cross Wilderness. The extent of this roadless area as inventoried by UASPP at 7,600 acres is approximately 1,600 acres larger than that shown on the Roadless Area Conservation Rule Inventory. Old logging and mining roads, now closed, can still be found on the ground here, and several routes are cherrystemmed, including the 4WD access road to the Tenth Mountain Division Hut. The Colorado Trail crosses the northern part of the roadless area between Tennessee Pass and the Holy Cross Wilderness.

Vegetation in the Holy Cross East roadless area is lodgepole pine on the east with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir on the west, interspersed with some montane meadows, mountain shrubland and wetlands. Several streams drain the areas toward the east including West Tennessee Creek, providing habitat for riparian species.

There is elk summer range across the area, some winter range on the south east, a sizeable elk production area on the northwest edge, and an elk migration corridor runs along its eastern edge toward Tennessee Pass. Mountain lion and black bear are found in the area. Holy Cross East is crossed by a very high priority linkage for lynx, extending from the Holy Cross Wilderness in the White River National Forest eastward into the Mosquito Range complex by way of Tennessee Pass. The linkage was identified by both SREP and the Forest Service, and SREP lists the portion north of the Continental Divide as one of the twelve highest priority linkages in Colorado. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity.

Holy Cross East is listed by the SREP Vision as a low compatible use area

Mount Elbert

The Mount Elbert roadless area is 22,700 acres lying roughly between forest road 110 along Halfmoon Creek on the north and Independence Pass Road on the south, and is next to the existing Mount Massive and Collegiate Peaks Wildernesses, with only these two roads between. The eastern boundary is defined by the Colorado Trail, forest routes and old mining claims, while the western boundary is the Independence Pass Road and the south edge of the Champion Mine private parcel. Much of the area is presently managed by the Forest Service for non-motorized recreation, and Mount Elbert is one of the most heavily visited high mountain peaks in Colorado.

As Colorado's highest Peak at 14,433 feet, it is not surprising that most of the Mount Elbert roadless area is alpine, including alpine grasslands and shrubs, wetlands and barren rock. Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir can be found in the lower areas around the edges and in the river valleys. There are lodgepole pine and aspen on the east and south sides with bristlecone/limber pine on the south boundary. There is a notable natural community of bristlecone pine/Thurber's

fescue (*Pinus aristata/Festuca thurberi*) lower montane woodlands along the south central boundary. Rare plants found here are northern twayblade (*Listera borealis*) and rockcress draba (*Draba globosa*). A number of streams drain the area, including Halfmoon and South Halfmoon Creeks on the north and Lake Creek on the south.

Elk and mule deer have summer range across the area, but winter range and production areas are located east of the roadless area in the Arkansas Valley. A large migration corridor for elk runs between the Mount Elbert and Elk Mountains roadless areas. Bighorn sheep summer range is located across the roadless area, with winter range on the south half, winter concentrations on the far south, and a large production area on the south above Lake Creek. There is summer range for mountain goats on the north side. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas. Lynx habitat is very sparse around the lower edges of the area in the stream drainages and on the eastern side, but radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. SREP has identified a lower priority linkage that runs north-south between the east edge of the Mount Elbert roadless area to the central Elk Mountains roadless area.

A portion of the southern part of Mount Elbert between Echo Creek and Monitor Gulch is rated as a PCA of high significance. The SREP Vision shows the whole roadless area as core wilderness.

La Plata Gulch

The La Plata Gulch Roadless Area comprises 4,000 acres on a ridgeline directly adjacent to the west boundary of the existing Collegiate Peaks Wilderness, and includes the western slope of La Plata Gulch, but the eastern slope and La Plata Peak itself is within the existing Wilderness. The area shows significant signs of past gold and silver mining activity, although many of these are fading into oblivion. Although all of the mines are defunct, the scars remain and inholdings abound in the larger basin. The boundaries of the area were drawn to exclude open routes and the more heavily impacted mining areas to the west in the South Fork of Lake Creek. There are signs along the South Fork of Lake Creek warning against drinking the toxic water. Snowmobiles are currently allowed within the La Plata Gulch portion of the area only on designated snowmobile routes, and much of the area is presently managed for nonmotorized recreation.

Alpine grasslands and shrubs and barren rock dominate most of the La Plata Gulch roadless area with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir in the lower drainages on the north, northeast and west. Lake Creek, Sayres Gulch and La Plata Gulch have riparian species.

There is summer range for mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep and mountain goats in the La Plata Gulch roadless area. There is a small elk calving area on the far north side in the Lake Creek drainage. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas, and lynx habitat is very sparse around the north and west edges of the area in the Sayres and La Plata Gulches, although radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. Some of the headwaters areas east of Sayres Gulch are part of the larger watershed for greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*) identified by SREP.

The SREP Vision shows the roadless area as core wilderness.

Elk Mountains

The Elk Mountains roadless area is a 24,800-acre area lying between County Road 390 and Twin Lakes, and is directly adjacent on the west to a spur of the existing Collegiate Peaks Wilderness. The eastern boundary is defined by several National Forest or BLM roads and includes a large

cherrystem that excludes the Columbine Mine. The area contains a spectacular and pristine basin with large peaks, lakes, and opportunity for solitude. Elevations within the roadless area range from approximately 9,500 feet near Twin Lakes to 13,933 atop Mount Hope, its chief landmark. Most of the area is presently managed for non-motorized recreation, and the Colorado Trail runs north-south through the middle of the area.

The west-central part of the Elk Mountains roadless area is alpine, including alpine grasslands and shrubs and barren rock. Areas of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir ring these higher elevations on the north, east and south, with significant stands of lodgepole pine and aspen on the northeast and east. The southern lowest elevations areas are aspen with some bristlecone/limber pine and Douglas-fir. The Elk Mountains area has numerous creeks draining the central elevations that have typical riparian vegetation.

Elk and mule deer summer range is found across the roadless area in appropriate habitats, with some winter range in its eastern portion, and some of the winter concentrations of mule deer extend from the Arkansas Valley into the far southwest side. Two large elk production areas are found across the northeastern side and along the south side in the Clear Creek drainage. Arms of the larger Arkansas Valley elk migration corridor surround the Elk Mountains area on three sides: on the north in Lake Creek between Mount Elbert and Elk Mountains, on the east parallel to the Arkansas River at the edge of the roadless area, and on the south in the Clear Creek drainage between the roadless area and Collegiate Peaks Wilderness. Bighorn sheep summer range is located across all but the east side, with winter range on the southern third, winter concentrations on the far south and a large production area on the south above Clear Creek. There is winter and summer range for mountain goats, with two production areas. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas. Lynx overall, denning, and winter habitat is found along the north, east, and south sides. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the area, and the Forest Service has identified an important linkage from the east side of the Elk Mountains, across the Arkansas Valley to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness in the Mosquito Range Complex. SREP has identified a lower priority linkage that runs north-south between the central Elk Mountains to the east edge of the Mount Elbert roadless area.

La Plata Basin and Crystal Lake Creek area on the northwest boundary exhibits good landscape integration and a rare plant community of bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue (*Pinus aristata/Festuca thurberi*), and mountain goats and bighorn sheep frequent the area.

The SREP Vision shows the whole area (excluding the Columbine Mine) as Core Wilderness.

Pine Creek

The Pine Creek roadless area, 6,900 acres, lying between the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and the Arkansas Valley, is directly adjacent to the Wilderness on the west and includes lower-elevation acreage that was excluded from the Wilderness when it was designated in 1993. The eastern boundary roughly follows the forest boundary and forest road 387, which is cherrystemmed into the area. The Colorado Trail is to the west inside the Wilderness boundary.

The Pine Creek roadless area is primarily lodgepole pine with scattered aspen and Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, and there are riparian species in the creek corridors.

The whole area is elk summer range with winter range found in its northern and eastern portions. Several elk calving areas are scattered across the roadless area, and the large Arkansas Valley migration corridor runs along its eastern edge. Mule deer find summer range across the whole area, with winter range on the extreme eastern side and out into the Arkansas Valley. American

peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) have been recorded on the east side. A bighorn sheep production area and winter range are located in the Pine Creek drainage, with summer range across the north part of the part area. Mountain lion and black bear are found here. The whole area is lynx habitat, including winter and denning habitat in the western half, and radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. A linkage for lynx goes from the Collegiate Peak Wilderness across the Pine Creek roadless area to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness in the Mosquito Range complex.

The SREP Vision shows the area as core wilderness.

Frenchman Creek

The Frenchman Creek roadless area is 2,500 acres that is directly adjacent on the west to the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness between forest road 386 to the north and forest road 368 to the south. The eastern boundary follows the Forest Service boundary. Both of these roads provide access to trailheads leading into the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and to the Colorado Trail, which is inside the Wilderness here. The Frenchman Creek roadless area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventory.

The Frenchman Creek roadless area is primarily lodgepole pine with some aspen and significant amounts of ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper on the east central part of the area, as well as riparian species in the creek corridors.

The area is summer and winter range for bighorn sheep, with a lambing area in the south central part that runs into the Wilderness to the northwest. The whole area is elk summer range with winter range found in its eastern half. The eastern half is also an elk calving area, and the large migration corridor in the Arkansas Valley runs along its eastern edge. Mule deer find summer range across the whole area, with winter range on the east side and out into the Arkansas Valley where there are significant winter concentrations. Mountain lion and black bear are found here, and the western portion is lynx overall and denning habitat. It's effectiveness as wildlife habitat is enhanced by the Heckendorf State Wildlife Area which is partially contiguous on the east side.

The SREP Vision shows the area as core wilderness

North Cottonwood Creek

The North Cottonwood Creek roadless area of 5,700 acres is bounded on the north by forest road 365 and trail 1449 which leads into the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness. The Colorado Trail cuts across the northwest corner to lead into the Wilderness. The western boundary is directly adjacent to the Wilderness boundary, and on the south and east, the boundary follows the National Forest boundary or some 4WD roads.

The vegetation in the North Cottonwood Creek roadless area is quite diverse both in location and types. There is some barren rock on the west on the slopes of Mount Yale, but most of the area is a mixture of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and aspen. Several areas of montane shrubland are found on the east and south; ponderosa pine, piñon juniper and bristlecone/limber pine on the south, and riparian species in the creek corridors. North Cottonwood Creek flows across the north edge of the area, and Cottonwood Creek is on the south side outside the Forest boundary.

The whole North Cottonwood Creek roadless area is elk summer range with winter range found in its northern and eastern portions. The majority of the area is an elk calving area. The south end

of the large Arkansas Valley elk migration corridor coming from the Mount Elbert/Elk Mountains region is two to three miles to the east. Mule deer find summer range across the whole area, with winter range on the extreme east and south sides and out into the Cottonwood Creek and Arkansas River drainages where animals concentrate in the winter. A bighorn sheep production area and winter range are located in the roadless area. Mountain lion and black bear are found here. The northern three-fourths of the area is lynx habitat and includes both denning and winter habitat. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. The rare boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*) is found here.

Nearly all of North Cottonwood Creek is included in TNC's Conservation Portfolio large Cottonwood Pass area of moderate conservation significance. The SREP Vision shows the roadless area as low use.

Kreutzer-Princeton

The 50,200-acre Kreutzer-Princeton roadless area is shaped like a chubby horseshoe, with Gladstone Ridge on the north arm, Mount Princeton and its western ridges on the south arm, and the crest of the range along the Continental Divide, including Mount Kreutzer connecting the two. The eastern boundary is defined by the Colorado Trail. Between these two high alpine ridges, South Cottonwood Creek forms a deep forested basin which transitions to alpine tundra in Mineral Basin on the east slopes of Emma Burr Mountain and Mount Kreutzer. The northern boundary follows County Road 306 to Cottonwood Pass and the southern boundary is defined by Country Road 162 which goes to Tincup Pass. On the west, only the Continental Divide and the Forest Boundary separate Kreutzer-Princeton from the Kreutzer-Princeton West roadless area which is recommended for Wilderness designation in the citizen's Mountains to Mesas conservation plan for the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison Forest Plan revision. The eastern boundary follows the Colorado Trail. The Kreutzer-Princeton area is the second-largest non-wilderness roadless area in the complex.

Mount Princeton Ridge, the Continental Divide and western Gladstone Ridge are primarily high-altitude tundra with some montane meadows and shrublands. Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir is predominant on the north side and on the north slopes of Mount Princeton Ridge, as well as on the east and south side. Lodgepole pine is found on the north and east lower elevations, with Douglas-fir and bristlecone/limber pine on the southeast lower elevations. Aspen are found in many places, with large stands in the central valley. This large central valley centered on South Cottonwood Creek and a number of tributaries provides extensive riparian zones that are dense with willows and other species. Rare plant and plant communities include aspen/Rocky Mountain maple (*Populus tremuloides/Acer glabrum*) montane riparian forests, bristlecone pine/alpine clover (*Pinus aristata/Trifolium dasyphyllum*) upper montane woodlands, dwarf or bog birch/mesic forb-mesic graminoid (*Betula glandulosa/mesic forb-mesic graminoid*), subalpine riparian shrubland, two species of rockcress (*Braya humilis* and *B. glabella var glabella*), woods draba (*Draba oligosperma*), the reflected moonwort (*Botrychium echo*), and variegated scouringrush (*Hippochaete variegata*).

Mule deer find summer habitat in the Kreutzer-Princeton roadless area. Elk summer range is found across the area, with some winter range in the river valleys of Middle and South Cottonwood Creeks and Chalk Creek, but most winter range is outside the roadless area to the east in the Arkansas Valley. Two calving areas are located in the west below the Continental Divide. Bighorn sheep find extensive summer range south of Cottonwood Creek, with some winter range on the far south side between the Chalk Cliffs and Poplar Gulch, and there is a large lambing area in the south-central portion. Mountain goats concentrate along the high ridges of Gladstone Ridge, Mount Princeton and the Continental Divide. Mountain lion and black bear are

found in suitable habit across the area. Lynx general, denning and winter habitat is concentrated around the forested lower edges of the area. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the area. SREP has identified a lower priority lynx linkage that connects from the southeast Collegiate Peaks Wilderness across to the southern edge of Kreutzer-Princeton. A high priority linkage identified by the Forest Service at Cottonwood Pass is adjacent to the Kreutzer-Princeton area. American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*) and dark northern blue butterfly (*Lycaeides idas sublivens*) are found here. Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*) are recorded in the western Mineral Basin area.

The southeastern portion of the area contains a proposed RNA that includes Mount Princeton and the Chalk Cliffs, as well as PCAs rated as of high significance on Mount Princeton, moderate significance at Spout Lake and general biodiversity interest at the Chalk Cliffs. Chalk Creek PCA of very high significance is located just outside the southeast boundary of the roadless area. The northwestern portion of Kreutzer-Princeton includes a proposed RNA in Mineral Basin. Two other areas of biodiversity interest are found in Morgan's Gulch in the southwest corner and on Gladstone Ridge. The northern two-thirds of Kreutzer-Princeton is included in TNC's Conservation Portfolio's large Cottonwood Pass areas of moderate conservation significance. SREP shows the roadless area as core wilderness in their Southern Rockies Wildlands Vision.

Romley

The Romley roadless area of 8,600 acres lies along the Continental Divide between the Kreutzer-Princeton and Mount Antero roadless areas, south of historic town of St. Elmo. Visitors to St. Elmo can explore the well-preserved remains of some 24 historic buildings of the gold rush days. As with many similar towns, a railroad served the town and its 2,000 residents until the ore was exhausted, A few hardy residents live here year round. A rough 4WD road continues west to Tincup Pass. The heavily mined area around Pomeroy Gulch, excluded from the Romley area, separates it from Mount Antero roadless area.

The vegetation includes high alpine areas of grasslands and shrublands, with Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir on the north, in the central Wildcat Gulch, and along the southeast and south sides. Rare plants include lance-leaved moonwort (*Botrychium lanceolatum var*), low northern sedge (*Carex concinna*) and northern twayblade (*Listera borealis*).

Mule deer, elk and mountain goats find summer habitat here. Elk migrate across the Continental Divide to and from the Romley roadless area, taking advantage of a relatively low portion of the Divide, below 12,000 feet, at the head of Chalk Creek. Mountain lion and black bear are found in suitable habit across the area. The area includes lynx habitat.

The SREP Vision shows the roadless area as core wilderness

Mount Antero

The Mount Antero roadless area includes three peaks over 14,000 feet, Mount Antero, Mount Tabeguach, and Mount Shavano, as well as a number of other high peaks. At 66,800 acres, Mount Antero is the largest non-Wilderness roadless area in the complex. The northern boundary follows County Road 162 to near St. Elmo. The western boundary is defined by Forest Roads in the Grizzly Gulch and Hancock areas and the Continental Divide south to the Monarch ski area. Colorado Highway 50 from Monarch Pass to Garfield and forest road 228 to the Colorado Trail delineates the south boundary. The Colorado Trail, several roads and the forest boundary are the east boundary. There are several cherrystemmed roads to access the North Fork Reservoir,

various trailheads on the east and the road to the top of Mount Antero, so that rock hounds can access the best gem areas.

Because of its high elevation, the bulk of Mount Antero is alpine tundra, grasslands and shrublands. However, Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir can be found just below the alpine areas and in Baldwin Creek, and the Middle and North Forks of the South Arkansas River. Aspen are located on the north central lower elevations, in the southeast and in the North Fork of the South Arkansas River drainage, with significant bristlecone/limber pine scattered across the east side. The lowest elevations to the east are predominantly lodgepole pine with some Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and few areas of piñon-juniper. In addition to Baldwin Creek and the forks of the South Arkansas, Browns Creek drains the central part of the area, flowing eastward to join the Arkansas River. Rare plant species include arctic draba (*Draba fladnizensis*), Colorado larkspur (*Delphinium ramosum var alpestre*), Gray's Peak whitlow-grass (*Draba grayana*), lance-leaved moonwort (*Botrychium lanceolatum var lanceolatum*) and mountain bladder fern (*Cystopteris montana*).

Mule deer find summer habitat in the Mount Antero roadless area. Elk summer range is found across the area, with some winter range in the Chalk Creek drainage, but primarily on the eastern lower elevation edges of the roadless area and on to the east in the Arkansas Valley. Three large calving areas are located on the east side and between the North Fork and South Fork of the River Arkansas in the south. Bighorn sheep find summer range across all but the west central part of the area, with some winter range on the northeast and southeast sides, and there are three large lambing areas on the lower eastern slopes of Mount Antero, Mount White and Mount Shavano. Mountain goats frequent the Mount Antero, Mount Shavano, Mount Aetna and the Grizzly Gulch vicinity. The area also has a genetically pure population of the threatened greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*) in the waters north of Monarch ski area. Boreal toads (*Bufo boreas*) are also found here. Mountain lion and black bear are found in suitable habit across the area. SREP's analysis shows a bear linkage across Monarch Pass and south along the Sangre de Cristo range connecting the core bear habitat to the west with the large bear habitat areas south of La Veta Pass. Lynx general, denning and winter habitat is concentrated around the forested lower edges of the area. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. SREP has identified two lower priority lynx linkages, one internal to the area on the west, and another that connects the north side of the area to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness area in the Mosquito Range Complex. More important, a high priority lynx linkage identified by both the Forest Service and SREP goes from the southwestern end of the Mount Antero roadless area southwest across the Chipeta roadless area ending at the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area in the Rio Grande National Forest. SREP's extensive work on "Linking Colorado Landscapes" named this Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass linkage among the twelve most important linkages in Colorado

There is a PCA of very high significance on Mount Shavano, and the Droney Gulch PCA of outstanding significance is located on the eastern boundary of Mount Antero. Chalk Creek PCA of very high significance is located just outside the northeast boundary of the roadless area. SREP shows the roadless area as core wilderness in their Southern Rockies Wildlands Vision.

The Mount Antero area is world-famous for gemstones such as aquamarine, smoky quartz and blue beryl, and is a popular rock hounding destination. The roadless area boundary includes a cherrystem road from Chalk Creek to the top of the mountain, so that rock hounds are able to continue to access the best gem areas. However, local residents and rockhounds complain that the relative ease of access has resulted in the surface area being largely "picked over", suggesting that future rockhounding will involve more intensive digging activities that will need to be more intensively regulated.

Chipeta

The Chipeta roadless area's 33,700 acres lie between Monarch Pass to the north and Marshall Pass to the south, and is dominated by a high mountain ridge which includes Pahlone Peak, Chipeta Mountain, and Mount Ouray the high point in the area at 13,971 feet. The north boundary follows the Colorado Trail in Fooses Creek and then forest road 225 to the Continental Divide just south of Monarch Pass. The Continental Divide is the western boundary, and a large roadless area Chipeta West that is contiguous in the Gunnison National forest, is recommended by the Mountains to Mesas citizen's plan for Wilderness designation. On the south, the boundary follows the Marshall Pass Road (forest road 200) to within a mile of O'Haver Lake where the boundary turns to define the eastern boundary at the ends of a network of logging roads or the Forest Boundary. There are a number of cherrystems on the east side to exclude open 4WD routes. Both the Colorado Trail and Continental Divide Trail cross the roadless area and permit mountain bike use.

Alpine tundra is concentrated on the southwest side of the Chipeta roadless area around Mount Ouray and Chipeta Mountain, with the slopes below the tundra and north along the Continental Divide being Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir. Lodgepole pine is predominant across the eastern half of the area, especially on the north side, with much aspen in the stream drainages, and some small areas of ponderosa pine, montane shrublands and piñon-juniper on the extreme northeast, and bristlecone/limber pine and ponderosa pine in scattered locations on the southeast. Chipeta has several major stream drainages, including Fooses Creek, Greens Creek, Pass Creek, Little Cochetopa Creek and Gray's Creek that harbor extensive willows and other riparian vegetation. It also has a notable natural community of narrowleaf cottonwood/Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia-juniperus scopulorum*) montane riparian forest in the lower reaches of Greens Creek.

Elk and mule deer summer range is spread across the Chipeta roadless area, but winter range is located on the extreme eastern edge and into the lower elevations in the Arkansas Valley. A very large elk production area is located from Fooses Creek south and east to Little Cochetopa Creek. Another calving area is found on the south side in the Marshall Pass and Poncha Creek area. Two bighorn sheep lambing areas are located on the eastern slopes of Chipeta Mountain and Mount Ouray and in the headwaters of Pass Creek. In addition to summer range for bighorns across the area, winter range is located in its northern portion along Green Creek. There is lynx general, denning, and winter habitat across most of the area, with the exception of the high non-forest areas of Mount Ouray and Chipeta Mountain. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. SREP has identified two lower priority lynx linkages that connect the northeast side of the area to the Browns Canyon area in the Arkansas Canyons Complex. More important, both the Forest Service and SREP identify a high priority lynx linkage from Monarch Pass southwest across Chipeta ending at the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area in the Rio Grande National Forest. SREP's extensive work on "Linking Colorado Landscapes" names this Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass linkage among the twelve most important linkages in Colorado.

Devils Armchair, a huge cirque on the east flank of Mount Ouray with its unusual geology, topography and rare plants and the McClure Creek area with the rare natural community of narrow-leaf cotton woods and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia-Juniperus scopulorum*) are of conservation interest. Lower Pass Creek, east of Chipeta is a PCA of very high significance.

The SREP Vision shows the area as core wilderness.

Starvation Creek

The Starvation Creek roadless area of 7,600 acres lies between Marshall Pass and the Antora Peak roadless area to the south. The northern boundary follows forest road 203, a rough 4WD route along Poncha Creek that parallels the Marshall Pass Road, to the Continental Divide which is the western boundary. The south boundary is separated from the Antora Peak roadless area by the Silver Creek mountain bike trail (1407) and then forest road 201 defines the boundary eastward until it joins the Poncha Creek route 203. The east-west trending long ridges of the area separate the Poncha, Starvation and Silver Creek drainages, north to south respectively. The upper portions of the area have experienced some past logging using heavy machinery. A road leading to a fairly recent logging area near the Continental Divide between Silver Creek and Starvation Creek and a road near the Divide north of Starvation Creek have been cherrystemmed out of the roadless area.

Vegetation within the roadless area is primarily Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir on the west with lodgepole pine, and substantial areas of aspen and Douglas-fir in the rest of the area. The roadless area has excellent riparian habitat, with numerous beaver ponds and wetlands along various streams, which is valuable both for wildlife and recreation.

There is summer range for bighorn sheep across the Starvation Creek roadless area. Elk and mule deer summer range is spread across the area, with winter range in the lower eastern side over into the north side of Poncha Pass. A large elk production area covers the south central part of the area along Silver and Starvation Creeks. A small part of the Poncha Creek calving area is on the north side of the area. Mountain lion and black bear are found across the area. There is lynx general habitat across the whole area, with denning and winter habitat more scattered. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the area. Most of the area is included in the Forest Service and SREP's high priority lynx linkage from Monarch Pass across Chipeta ending at the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness. SREP's extensive work on "Linking Colorado Landscapes" names this Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass linkage among the twelve most important linkages in Colorado.

The SREP Vision shows the roadless area as core agency.

Porphyry

The 3,500-acre Porphyry roadless area lies along the boundary of the San Isabel and Rio Grande National Forests, which forms its southeastern boundary. The northwestern boundary follows the motorized Rainbow Trail (1336), and the western boundary is along the 4WD road 869.2 in Toll Road Gulch.

Vegetation in the Porphyry roadless area is primarily lodgepole pine with significant amounts of Douglas-fir, spruce-fir, and bristlecone/limber pine and aspen. Because of its relatively low elevation, there is only a small amount of barren rock and alpine vegetation in the vicinity of Porphyry Peak (11,583). Silver Creek is an extensive riparian zone on the north boundary, and there are examples of bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue (*Pinus aristata*/*Festuca thurberi*) lower montane woodlands.

There is summer range for bighorn sheep and mule deer across the Porphyry roadless area. Elk summer range is spread across the area, with winter range in the lower eastern side. Mountain lion and black bear are found here. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. Lynx habitat, including winter and denning habitat is found across the area, and the Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass, lynx linkage identified by the Forest

Service and SREP is located along the north side.

The Porphyry Peak proposed RNA covers nearly the entire roadless area. SREP's Vision shows a small part of the roadless area on the west as core wilderness, but most of the area is a wildlife linkage.

Antora Peak

The Antora Peak roadless area, the southernmost roadless area within the Sawatch Complex, stands at 3,800 acres. It is bounded on the south and west by the Rio Grande National Forest, on the north by trail 1407 along Silver Creek and on the east by forest road 869.2 in Toll Road Gulch. A small clear-cut area on the east side near Toll Road Gulch is rapidly regenerating. The historic Kismuth Mine at the northeast corner of the area is excluded from the roadless area. The Silver Creek trail, closed to motorized use, is part of a popular mountain bike route from Monarch and Marshall Passes where riders can either loop back to their starting point or continue east on the Rainbow Trail (motorized) in the Porphyry roadless area, that takes riders over to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

Sheep Mountain and Antora Peak, which dominate the southern edge of the Antora Peak roadless area, are alpine tundra, with most of the rest of the area covered in Engelmann-spruce-subalpine fir. There are some scattered aspen and bristlecone/limber pines.

There is summer range for bighorn sheep and mule deer across the Antora Peak roadless area, with a sizeable concentration of animals on Sheep Mountain and into the Rio Grande National Forest, as well as a lambing area just south in the Rio Grande National Forest. Elk summer range is spread across the area, and part of the Silver Creek production area is found on the north side. Mountain lion and black bear are found here. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. General, denning, and winter habitat for lynx is found on most of the area with the exception of the high bare ridges of Sheep Mountain and Antora Peak.

The Antora Peak proposed RNA covers most of the roadless area. The Nature Conservancy's very large Trickle Mountain area of moderate conservation significance, located primarily on the Rio Grande national Forest, comes over into Antora Peak on the west. SREP's Vision shows the whole roadless area as core wilderness.

Historical and Cultural Features of the Sawatch Complex

Some archeological, historical and cultural features of note include:

- The Alpine Tunnel along the Continental Divide south of Romley and west of Antero roadless areas is a National Historic Site.
- The Sawatch Range was more heavily populated during the mining era and portions of the Sawatch Complex have experienced significant mining activity leaving behind long-abandoned, ruined cabins and other minor signs of past human occupancy. Additionally, prospects, tailings piles and major mine structures can still be seen, although many are fading into oblivion. This is particularly noticeable in the La Plata Gulch area. The town of St. Elmo, along Chalk Creek between the Kreuzer-Princeton and Antero roadless areas, is a National Historic District, as are portions of Clear Creek in the vicinity of Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and proposed wilderness additions, including the sites of Winfield and Vicksburg mining camps. Both these designated historic districts include some land in San Isabel National Forest.

Management Recommendations

Overview

The ecological value of protecting large roadless areas led the Wild Connections team to recommend three additions to the designated Wildernesses, six new Wilderness designations and two areas for Core management (Theme 1). There are five proposed RNAs (Theme 2): one RNA is proposed within an existing designated Wilderness, two new RNAs are proposed for incorporation into areas recommended for wilderness designation, and Porphyry and Antora Peak are proposed as a non-wilderness RNAs. In addition there are quiet use and connectivity areas (Theme 3); recreation emphasis areas (Theme 4); and a number of areas recommended for Theme 5 active management for wildlife habitat. 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 5.15 lists the major management units by theme. Refer to the Sawatch Range Complex map for specific locations and refer to the roadless area descriptions above for more details on the unit.

Table 5.15: Sawatch Range Management Recommendations

Name	Acres	Recommended Management
Theme 1 – Natural Processes Dominate		
Collegiate Peaks Wilderness	82,000	1.1 Existing Wilderness
Holy Cross Wilderness	9,000	1.1 Existing Wilderness
Mount Massive Wilderness	30,500	1.1 Existing Wilderness
Chipeta	18,300	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Elk Mountains	11,900	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (add to Collegiate Peaks)
Frenchman Creek	2,500	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (add to Collegiate Peaks)
Kreutzer-Princeton	50,200	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
LaPlata Gulch	4,100	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (add to Collegiate Peaks)
Mount Antero	58,300	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Mount Elbert	22,500	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Pine Creek	6,900	1.2 Recommended Wilderness (add to Collegiate Peaks)
Romley	8,600	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Starvation Creek	7,600	1.2 Recommended Wilderness
Hope Pass	13,400	1.3 Core Reserve
Pahlone Peak	15,000	1.3 Core Reserve
Theme 2 – Special Areas		
Antora Peak Sheep Mountain RNA	3,900	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Mineral Basin Jones Mountain RNA	2,100	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Mount Princeton RNA	5,600	2.1 Research Natural Areas
North Willow Creek RNA	10,200	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Porphyry Peak RNA	4,100	2.1 Research Natural Areas
Theme 3 – Natural Landscapes with Limited Management		
Holy Cross East	7,700	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Huron Peak	3,600	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Mount Antero East	7,600	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Mount Champion	1,400	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
North Cottonwood Creek	5,700	3.1 Quiet Use Areas
Hagerman Pass	9,100	3.2 Connectivity Areas
South Arkansas River	3,100	3.2 Connectivity Areas

Name	Acres	Recommended Management
Tennessee Pass (also in Mosquito Range)	2,900	3.2 Connectivity Areas
Tumble Creek (also in Mosquito Range)	2,100	3.2 Connectivity Areas
Theme 4 – Recreation Emphasis Areas		
Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway	200	4.2 Scenic Byways
Theme 5 – Active Management		
Antero Shavano Slopes East	9,800	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Bald Mountain.	3,300	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Cache Creek	100	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Clear Creek Sawatch	2,200	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Fooses Creek	9,800	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Grizzly Gulch Hancock Pass	4,700	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Harvard Lakes	3,800	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Independence Pass	2,700	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Marshall/Poncha Passes	18,700	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Mount Elbert E	13,500	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
South Fork Lake Creek	3,900	5.1 Active Mgmt - Wildlife Habitat
Theme 8 – Permanently Developed Areas		
Monarch Ski Area	900	8.1 Ski Based Resorts
Theme 9 – Significant Lands (Non-USFS)		
Turquoise Lake	3,700	8.2 Permanently Developed Recreation Areas
Twin Lakes	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 and semi-primitive lands that provide user opportunities that are inconsistent with Wilderness such as mountain biking.

Theme 1.1 – Existing Wilderness

Wilderness Areas are designated by Congress and managed to protect and perpetuate their natural state, while offering opportunities for solitude and individual self-reliance.

- Holy Cross, Mount Massive, and Collegiate Peaks Wildernesses are located in this complex. They should be managed over the next decade to bring them up to the national standards reflected in the Wilderness Stewardship Challenge issued by the Forest Service in celebration of the 40th anniversary of The Wilderness Act. (http://natlforests.org/wilderness_stewardship_10year.html)

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 (north to south) La Plata Gulch, the west part of Elk Mountains, Pine Creek, and Frenchman Creek as additions to Collegiate Peaks Wilderness; and Mount Elbert, Kreutzer-Princeton, Romley, Mount Antero, and the south portion of Chipeta as stand-alone Wildernesses. They are each described in detail in the roadless area descriptions above. In general, the proposed Wilderness boundary is the same as the UASPP roadless area boundary except for Elk Mountains and Chipeta. In the Elk Mountains roadless area, the area west of the Colorado Trail is recommended Wilderness. In the Chipeta roadless area, the area south

of trail 1412 along Green Creek is recommended Wilderness. This recommendation is based on balancing the following values: permanent protection to enhance wildlife habitat and connectivity, protection of sources of domestic water, provision for native species, and opportunities for quiet, challenging back county recreation against ample opportunities for motorized, high impact recreation in other parts of the complex.

We believe that all of these areas meet the capability, availability and suitability criteria of the Wilderness Act and Forest Service Wilderness Handbook. These are discussed for the complex as 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 mountains, and deep valleys with primitive trails or no trails at all, long alpine ridges covered in tundra and rock, and forested ridges. The imprints of humans are substantially unnoticeable, as care was taken to eliminate major mining areas including the Kismuth Mine in Silver Creek between Starvation Creek and Antora Peak and recent logging operations. While there are old mines in some areas, especially in the La Plata Gulch area, Clear Creek, and Chalk Creek areas, most are slowly disappearing. These 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 or nonexistent within these proposed wildernesses and logged areas and old access roads are recovering, bringing an end to overt signs of human use.

Availability

Likewise all the proposed areas are available for Wilderness with no known or only minor impediments. The proposed Wildernesses contain no active mines, though there is some gold panning, primarily on private land in the Clear Creek, Chalk Creek, Monarch, and Arkansas River areas. The watersheds and streams are already allocated, and no new water projects are planned.

Major highways are not anticipated to affect the areas. The proposed wilderness boundaries have been drawn to exclude portions of the Colorado Trail not already within designated wildernesses, so that mountain bike use will not be affected. The wildlife, ecological and wilderness values of South Cottonwood Creek in Kreutzer- Princeton will be better protected with the recommended closure of the upper portion of forest road 344 to protect the proposed RNA and fragile tundra in Mineral Basin, as well as closure of the extremely rough trail 1436 to improve landscape integrity. Conversion of the upper portion of Pass Creek and Little Cochetopa roads to foot and pack stock use will affect a few users, but will improve Wilderness integrity by reducing the length of cherrystems. Mountain biking on the Silver Creek Trail was accommodated by excluding it from the Starvation Creek Wilderness and Antora Peak RNA.

The Sawatch complex is not expected to be useful for timber harvest. Some past clearcutting, in some cases in the aftermath of large wildfires, has occurred, but the areas have revegetated into mature forest. Recent logging in the north portion of Starvation Creek is excluded from the Wilderness boundary. Because of steep slopes and isolated terrain, remote from developed private land, it is unlikely that mechanized thinning of these areas for purposes of fire prevention would be feasible or necessary. Vegetation within the proposed wilderness areas is largely intact with much of it tending toward mature and old growth characteristics. All or parts of the Browns Creek, Arkansas, Fooses Creek and Little Cochetopa grazing allotments would be grandfathered in with Wilderness designation, although over time they should be retired where feasible. These

do not present a problem for Wilderness designation.

Suitability

The main use that would be forgone in newly designated Wilderness is motorized recreation, primarily on illegal routes, but also on a few miles of road proposed for closure to protect particularly sensitive areas. The wildlife, ecological and wilderness values of South Cottonwood Creek in Kreuzer- Princeton will be better protected with the recommended closure of the upper portion of forest road 344 to protect the proposed RNA and fragile tundra in Mineral Basin. Forest roads 277, 278, and 279 on Mount Antero are recommended for closure to protect the ecological values, but the road to the peak area is cherrystemmed so that rock hounds can continue to access the gemstones. In Chipeta, conversion of the upper portion of Pass Creek and Little Cochetopa roads to foot and pack stock use will affect a few users, but will improve Wilderness integrity by reducing the length of cherrystems. Mountain biking on the Silver Creek Trail was accommodated by excluding it from the Starvation Creek Wilderness and Antora Peak RNA.

In some cases, cross country snowmobile use off currently designated routes would be curtailed. Some opportunity for backcountry downhill skiing accessed through helicopter or snow vehicle in the vicinity of Monarch Pass would be lost.

There are numerous values that undergird the designation of the proposed Wildernesses and contribute to the National Wilderness System.

- There are outstanding opportunities for solitude, quiet backcountry recreation and challenge throughout the area. The rugged mountain terrain and stream drainages provide backcountry recreation on foot or horseback in unparalleled scenic settings ranging from rocky mountain tops to dense forests. The Colorado Trail would be preserved as a non-motorized hiking and mountain biking trail adjacent to a number of the proposed Wildernesses, and there are many foot/horse trails that lead to the interior.
- Although much of the proposed Wilderness areas is alpine tundra, barren rock, and high elevation forests, areas of lower montane ecosystems will be added to the Wilderness system on the eastern edges of Kreuzer-Princeton, Mount Antero, Chipeta and Starvation Creek.
- Habitat will be protected for a number of rare and endangered species, including boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*), greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*), lynx and any number of rare plants and plant associations.
- These Wilderness areas will protect recently-reintroduced lynx, which according to a recent Colorado Division of Wildlife survey have made a large portion of the northern Sawatch Range one of their two prime concentration and breeding areas in Colorado. A number of linkages identified by the Forest Service and Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project are located in the proposed Wilderness areas.
- Designation will also protect other species which require interior forests at montane and subalpine elevations, such as pine marten and (possibly extirpated) wolverine.
- Designation would help protect domestic water supplies from erosion and pollution. The Sawatch complex includes streams feeding into Turquoise Lake, Twin Lakes, and Clear Creek Reservoir, as well as many of the headwaters of the Arkansas River, which feeds into Pueblo Reservoir. Directly or indirectly, every stream in the complex is a source of drinking water, as well as water for agricultural purposes.
- Historical access to the perimeter of the Wilderness areas is maintained on existing roads at Hagerman Pass, Independence Pass, Cottonwood Pass, Monarch Pass, and Marshall Pass, as well as the Halfmoon Creek, Clear Creek, South Cottonwood Creek, Chalk

- Creek, North Fork of the South Arkansas River, and Marshall Pass.
- Designation of additional Wilderness within this complex would help prevent further habitat fragmentation caused by roads, and damage to riparian zones, loss of old-growth forests, and conversion to intensive, invasive motorized recreation would not be exacerbated.
 - Historical sites are found in some of the Wilderness areas, or adjacent to them, that recount the mining heritage of Colorado.
 - The high mountain ridges and valleys exemplify the wildness that now brings recreationists, tourists, and new residents to Colorado. Both the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail run through proposed wildernesses in the Sawatch Complex. In light of increasing requests for additional developed and motorized recreation, 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-guiding and outfitter trips.

Theme 1.3 – Core Reserve

Core Reserves are areas of unroaded land which have been shaped primarily by natural forces but are not desirable for designation as wilderness. They emphasize the maintenance and sustainability of current biological diversity.

Pahlone and Hope Pass, though essentially roadless, did not fully meet Wilderness standards and so are recommended instead for Core designation.

- Pahlone, the northern part of the larger Chipeta roadless area, meets many of the requirements for Wilderness designation, but is recommended as a Core Reserve because of the presence of cherrystemmed roads, most significantly the Willow Creek road (forest road 222), the motorized trail 1412 along Green Creek that divides it from the adjacent Chipeta proposed wilderness, and a segment of the Colorado Trail in Fooses Creek, currently open to mountain bikes. It includes an area of significant biodiversity in McClure Creek, a lower-elevation area on the northwest side of the roadless area with a rare natural community of narrow-leaf cotton woods and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia-Juniperus scopulorum*).
- Hope Pass, the area east of the Colorado Trail in the Elk Mountains roadless area, also meets many Wilderness designation requirements, but is recommended for Core management to because of the large Columbine Mine on the east and to preserve mountain biking on the Colorado Trail that goes through the middle of the roadless area. The Elk Mountains proposed Wilderness is immediately west of the Colorado Trail.

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, North Willow Creek - in the Mount Massive Wilderness, Mineral Basin/Jones Mountain, Mount Princeton,

Porphyry and Antora Peak/Sheep Mountain are recommended for addition to the RNA system. Each has their unique combination of ecological values which will enhance the system, and detailed descriptions are found in the roadless area descriptions above.

- Mount Massive Wilderness includes the 10,200-acre North Willow Creek proposed RNA, which is "rich in varied and high-quality wetlands (glacial kettles and tarns, willow carrs, fens, riparian shrublands, beaver meadows, seeps) fed by gradual snowmelt and low evapotranspiration rates which can be attributed to the high elevation and generally east-facing aspect". (Janet Coles Colorado Natural Areas Program, March 1998.) Of the 27 plant associations identified within in North Willow Creek, only one is known to occur in an established RNA in the Rocky Mountain region. Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*) has been reintroduced to lakes and streams within the potential RNA, and SREP identifies the Rock Creek drainage as a significant area for the trout. Although there are no records of federally listed sensitive, threatened, or endangered plant species within the proposed RNA, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program has records of three state-rare plant species occurring just south of the potential RNA boundary - thick-leaf whitlow-grass (*Draba crassa*), tundra draba (*Draba ventosa*) and alpine poppy (*Papaver lapponicum ssp. occidentale*) - and considers it likely that additional populations of these species occur within the potential RNA.
- Mount Princeton proposed RNA of 5,600 acres includes a population of boreal toads (*Bufo boreas*). Its chalk cliffs are a peregrine falcon nesting area, as well as of geological interest. It also contains a rare upper montane association of bristlecone pine/alpine clover (*Pinus aristata/Trifolium dasyphyllum*). The area intersects two Potential Conservation Areas, Mount Princeton, rated as of high significance, and Chalk Cliffs, rated as of general biodiversity interest by CNHP.
- Mineral Basin proposed RNA is 2,100 acres and includes a reintroduced population of greenback cutthroat trout. It has of the largest breeding colonies of boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*) in the area and is a boreal toad migration area. There are records of wolverine tracks reported in the area and plus records of the historic occurrence of the northern blue butterfly (*Lycæides idas sublivens*). There are three rare or endangered plant species within the proposed RNA: dwarf hawskbeard (*Askellia nana*); arctic draba (*Draba fladnizensis*); and alpine braya (*Braya humilis*).
- The 4,100-acre Porphyry Peak proposed RNA covers nearly the entire roadless area of the same name. The historic townsite of Shirley, located east of the Porphyry proposed RNA, was excluded from the area. Porphyry Peak itself lies on the northern edge of the Bonanza Caldera (located in the Rio Grande National Forest) which resulted from activity in the San Juan volcanic field in the Tertiary Period. TNC's Conservation Portfolio Trickle Mountain unit of moderate biodiversity interest overlaps the southwest corner of the area. Porphyry is forested with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir on the southwest, lodgepole pine mixed with Douglas-fir across most of the rest of the area, with some bristlecone/limber pine, and aspen. There is a sensitive bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue (*Pinus aristata/Festuca thurberi*) lower montane woodlands plant community in the proposed RNA.
- The Antora Peak/Sheep Mountain proposed RNA of 3,900 acres covers most of the roadless area of the same name. It lies at the juncture of the Gunnison, San Isabel and Rio Grande Forests. The barren slopes and tundra of Sheep Mountain give way to spruce-fir stands, with pockets of lodgepole, limber pine, and aspen, providing diverse wildlife habitat. The Middle Creek PCA of general biodiversity interest is adjacent to the southwest in the Rio Grand National Forest. TNC's Conservation Portfolio Trickle Mountain unit of moderate biodiversity interest covers the western half of the area. As might be expected from the name, bighorn sheep concentrate here and on the southern slopes in the Rio Grande National Forest in the summer, and there is a lambing area to the south.

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.

Five quiet use areas are proposed in the Sawatch Range complex. Holy Cross East has some old logging roads now closed to motorized use, as well as trails, including the Colorado Trail, which are all suitable for quiet backcountry use. Mount Champion, an old mine site, is located between Mount Massive Wilderness and Mount Elbert proposed Wilderness. The area is currently closed to motorized use. Huron Peak, at the end of Forest Road 390, has a number of old routes that are suitable for mountain biking or hiking, or as a jumping off point to the proposed Elk Mountains Wilderness to the north or the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness to the south. North Cottonwood Creek is a roadless area that was judged to not meet the highest standards for Wilderness. It includes a section of the Colorado Trail which goes into the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness immediately to the west, as well as bushwhacking opportunities along the riparian zone of the Creek. Mount Antero East is adjacent to the Mount Antero proposed Wilderness, with the boundary at the Colorado Trail. A number of routes are cherrystemmed into the area to provide continued access to the Colorado Trail and other Mount Antero trailheads.

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.

Four areas in the Sawatch Complex are recommended as connectivity areas with two of the areas crossing into another complex. From north to south:

- Tennessee Pass area connects Holy Cross Wilderness and Holy Cross East quiet use area with Chicago Ridge quiet use area in the Mosquito Range complex to the east. It is one of the important linkages for lynx for movements east- west, as well as north-south into the adjacent White River Forest.
- The larger Hagerman Pass area bridges the land from Holy Cross Wilderness to Mount Massive Wildernesses.
- Tumble Creek is a smaller area that is an important movement corridor east-west across the Arkansas River Valley between Pine Creek proposed Wilderness and Buffalo Peaks Wilderness to the east in the Mosquito Range complex.
- The South Arkansas River connectivity area provides movement from Mount Antero Wilderness, across US Highway 50 to the Pahlone core reserve.

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 4.2 – Scenic Byways

These areas consist of designated scenic byways, scenic areas, vistas, and travel corridors, or other high-quality scenic areas in which outstanding features draw attention and to which people gravitate.

A portion of the Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway is near and on the boundary between the Sawatch Range and Mosquito Range Complexes along US Highway 24 at Tennessee Pass, and a second portion on Colorado Highway 82 (Independence Pass Road) goes from US Highway 24 west to the small community of Twin Lakes. Although the designated byway does not extend up Colorado Highway 82 to Independence Pass, this designation brings and will continue to bring more visitors into the area.

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.

Some of these wildlife areas are at higher elevations: Grizzly Gulch, Hancock Pass, Independence Pass and South Fork Lake Creek. Others such as Fooses Creek and Marshall/Poncha Pass range from moderate or low to higher elevations, and in addition have extensive riparian habitat. Antero/Shavano Slopes East, Bald Mountain, Cache Creek, Clear Creek Sawatch, Mount Elbert East, and Harvard Lakes are on the eastern edges of the Forest and provide summer and winter range for several species.

Wildlife Habitat areas are primarily located between recommended Wildernesses or along the forest boundary, with road densities ranging from low to high. Many of them are located in a riparian valley with a road and will require some oversight to protect riparian vegetation and water quality. Consideration should be given to the sensitive wildlife areas: mule deer fawning, elk calving, and bighorn sheep lambing areas; winter range for ungulates; locations of rare, endangered or sensitive species, such as boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*); and accommodation of larger carnivores such as lynx.

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. Management emphasis is generally for highly developed recreation sites (ski areas), utility corridors, or mineral development areas.

Theme 8.1 – Ski Based Resorts

Management emphasis provides for downhill skiing on existing sites.

Monarch Pass Ski and Snowboard area is one of only two operational ski areas on the Pike-San Isabel National Forest (Ski Cooper is the other in the Mosquito Range complex). It caters to families and those who enjoy natural snow away from the crowded slopes of the big resorts like Vail or Copper Mountain. In addition to terrain accessed by lifts for downhill skiing, there is excellent backcountry skiing and snowboarding terrain. Management is governed by a special use permit.

Theme 8.2– Permanently Developed Recreation Areas

These areas contain developed recreation sites that provide an array of recreational opportunities and experiences in a forested environment.

The two permanently developed areas in the Sawatch Range Complex are located at Turquoise Lake and at Twin Lakes. Numerous campgrounds and picnic areas, fishing and boating, hiking, mountain biking, or driving on nearby routes provide recreation in a scenic setting with the lakes backed by the towering mountain peaks to the west.

Connectivity

An important aspect of our conservation perspective is connections between protected core areas. In general, the Sawatch Complex has good connectivity between roadless areas, particularly at higher elevations, helping it to function as a relatively continuous landscape. Most of the roadless areas are separated by low or medium-use roads. However, Colorado Highway 82 crossing Independence Pass, County Road 306 crossing Cottonwood Pass, and US Highway 50 crossing Monarch Pass, are high-use roads which pose substantial barriers to wildlife movement.

The Sawatch Range Complex is contiguous with large roadless areas in the White River, Gunnison, and Rio Grande National Forests to the north, west, and south; however, the high altitudes of the Continental Divide serve as a natural barrier to animal movement. The passes and valleys which serve naturally as migration corridors are also road corridors, with locally intensive human occupation hindering wildlife movement. To the east, the Arkansas River Valley is generally in private ownership and in many places heavily developed. Although ranchlands in the valleys may benefit ungulate species, this corridor of intensive human use in general acts as a significant barrier to wildlife, funneling that movement into the few relatively undeveloped corridors. Even in these undeveloped corridors, US Highways 24 and 285 running along the Arkansas River and over Poncha Pass pose a significant barrier to wildlife movement. Increasing human use and occupancy of this relatively low-elevation area and natural wintering-ground for wildlife makes it all the more important to ensure landscape integrity within National Forest lands.

The Sawatch complex is notable for its lynx linkages. These areas of potential and actual movement of dispersing lynx were identified by the Forest Service in the proposed Lynx Amendment, and by the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project. Some linkages are located across the Arkansas River Valley in lower elevations, and others are at higher elevations at Tennessee Pass, along the Continental Divide and in the Monarch Pass to Poncha Pass area. This later linkage is most important as it provides the most feasible connection between the Sawatch Range and the Sangre de Cristo Range. In addition, SREP's analysis shows secondary wolf habitat across the Wilderness areas between Cottonwood Pass and Monarch Pass, with a potential dispersal route south of Monarch Pass connecting to the Sangre de Cristo Range. Similar modeling by SREP shows a major black bear linkage from the high quality bear cores on the western slope across Monarch and Poncha Passes, south along the Sangres and connecting to the very large bear core area in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.

Summary

The Sawatch Range complex harbors some of Colorado's most stunning scenery, with Fourteeners and many other high peaks rising above the densely forested lower slopes. From the highest point on Mount Elbert to the lower areas at the south blending into the Cochetopa Hills, there is an abundance of wildlife habitat, and dispersing lynx from the San Juan Mountains have capitalized on the extensive lynx habitat along the mountain range. These high mountains and lush riparian areas are an integral part of the network of wildlands that will sustain the integrity of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest, both now and in the foreseeable future.