

Fundamental Objectives to Fulfill the Goals of the WCCP

The primary goal of the Wild Connections Conservation Plan is ***to protect and restore the native biological diversity of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest***. A secondary goal is ***to promote sustainable interactions between human society and the natural environment of this National Forest***.

Utilizing the framework of conservation biology, and those of Noss and Cooperrider (1994), we have identified the following fundamental objectives that move towards the fulfillment of the major goals:

- Employ proactive management strategies and policies that solve and mitigate current threats and pressures to our public lands, rather than solely rely on treating the symptoms of current damage and imbalances;
- Protect large, remaining areas of primitive and wild habitat within the system by implementing strictly protective management;
- Represent, expand and diversify the current portfolio of protected areas to include sustainable, large areas of all native ecosystem types, including all successional stages and natural ranges of variability, as well as to include lower elevation ecosystems, such as ponderosa pine forests and piñon-juniper woodlands;
- Secure additional protection of habitat and prevent further landscape fragmentation in order to restore connectivity between the large wild 'core' areas to ensure the natural ability of species to disperse and migrate;
- Protect and restore ecologically effective populations of all native species once abundant to the Pike-San Isabel, including large carnivores, in natural patterns of abundance and distribution; • After scientific study, control and eradicate invasive exotic species which are detrimental to the ecosystem;
- Protect and restore ecological and evolutionary processes, such as disturbance regimes, hydrological processes, nutrient cycles, and biotic interactions;
- Manage landscapes and natural communities to be responsive to short-term and long-term environmental change and to maintain the evolutionary potential of the biota;