

Table Of Contents

Chapter 1. Purpose of and Need for Action.....	1
1.1 Proposed Action.....	1
1.2 Purpose of and Need for Action.....	1
1.3 Decision to Be Made.....	2
1.4 Background.....	2
1.5 Location and WSR Boundary.....	2
1.6 Land Jurisdictions and Management Authorities.....	3
1.7 WSR Segments.....	6
1.8 Outstandingly Remarkable Values.....	8
1.9 The 1968 WSR Act as amended.....	9
1.10 Relationship to Other Laws, Regulations, Policies and the Forest Plan.....	10
1.11 Public Involvement and Project Chronology to Date.....	11
1.12 Key Issues.....	11
Chapter 2. Alternatives.....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Descriptions of Alternatives.....	13
2.3 Management Direction <i>Common</i> to all Action Alternatives.....	14
2.4 Management Direction that <i>Differs</i> Between Alternatives.....	18
2.3 Comparison of Alternatives.....	20
2.5 Comparison of Effects of Alternatives.....	22
Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.....	26
3.1 Recreation Uses, Trends and Capacity – Affected Environment.....	26
3.2 Trails – Affected Environment.....	29
3.3 Developed Recreation Sites - Affected Environment.....	32
3.4 Dispersed (Undeveloped) Recreation Uses - Affected Environment.....	36
3.5 Scenic Resources – Affected Environment.....	40
3.6 Roads – Affected Environment.....	43
3.7 Cultural/Historic (Heritage Resources) – Affected Environment.....	44
3.8 Livestock Grazing – Affected Environment.....	47
3.9 Lands and Special Uses – Affected Environment.....	56
3.10 Other Social and Economic – Affected Environment.....	59
3.11 Water and Riparian – Affected Environment.....	60
3.12 Soils – Affected Environment.....	63
3.13 Fish – Affected Environment.....	65
3.14 Wildlife and Rare Plants– Affected Environment.....	66
3.15 Vegetation, Fire and Fuels – Affected Environment.....	74
3.16 Cumulative Effects.....	78
Chapter 4. List of Preparers and Consultation with Others.....	86
4.1 List of Preparers.....	86
4.2 Consultation With Others.....	86
References.....	A

Table Of Figures

Figure 1: Vicinity Map.....	2
Figure 2: Jurisdiction – Recreation segment.....	5
Figure 3: River Segments.....	7
Figure 4: Trails within the Wild and Scenic River Corridor.....	31
Figure 5: Developed Recreation – Recreational Segment.....	35
Figure 6: Pecos Wild and Scenic River: Important Fish and Wildlife Areas.....	38
Figure 7: Allotments within the Wild and Scenic River Corridor.....	48
Figure 8: Grazing within the Recreational Segment of the River Corridor.....	49
Figure 9: Grazing within the Wild Segment of the River Corridor.....	54
Figure 10: Distribution of the major vegetation types.....	75
Figure 11: Pecos Wild and Scenic River: Past Fires.....	77
Table 1 – Ownership.....	3
Table 2 – Comparison of allowable and prohibited uses between alternatives.....	20
Table 3 - Comparison of Effects between Alternatives.....	22
Table 4 - Recreational Use in the U.S.....	27
Table 5 – Grazed verses total acres by reach.....	53
Table 6 - Federally listed TE&P species which may occur on the SFNF.....	67
Table 7 - Region 3 (Southwest) Sensitive Species that may occur on the SFNF.....	68
Table 8 - MIS Species and Habitats.....	70
Table 9 - Summary table of cumulative effects.....	82
Table 10 - Summary table of Foreseeable Future Actions/Uses Other than in WSR Mgmt Plan.....	83

Chapter 1. Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Proposed Action

The Forest Supervisor of the Santa Fe National Forest is proposing that programmatic management direction (standards and guidelines) be incorporated into a comprehensive Pecos Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and into the Santa Fe National Forest Plan as a non-significant amendment. The proposed direction provides a long-term management strategy for protecting the river's free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (hereafter referred to as river values).

The Proposed Action provides direction that would control certain recreational activities, especially along the river's edge, to protect and enhance environmental conditions and river values. In the Recreational segment of the Pecos Wild and Scenic River, the Forest Service proposes to designate day use areas, parking, campgrounds, and dispersed campsites; prohibit floating on the river; prohibit driving and other motorized vehicle use off of roads or outside designated parking areas; and allow harvest or prescribed burning only when the purpose is to maintain, protect, or enhance the values for which the river was designated. Along the entire corridor, the Forest Service would relocate, eliminate, or rehabilitate user-created trails that are impacting the resource.

The proposed standards and guidelines are listed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.2 Purpose of and Need for Action

The purpose of and need for the proposed management plan and Forest Plan amendment are:

- To meet the National Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) Act requirement to develop a management plan for each designated WSR, and the Forest Service requirement to incorporate all programmatic management direction into the Forest Plan.
- To strengthen or add to current Forest Plan direction in the WSR corridor, thereby ensuring protection of river values.

Over the past decade, the Forest Service and State of New Mexico have issued and implemented several regulations and projects to control land uses along the river, protecting and enhancing river values. These actions have improved soil, vegetation, and riparian conditions. Overall, water quality and other resources are in good to excellent condition, and are on an upward trend. Riparian conditions identified as a concern on State lands in previous (EAs) Environmental Analyses are being addressed and show signs of continued improvement. If uncontrolled recreational use continues or increases, however, environmental conditions could degrade.

The key planning question used to develop the proposed direction was:

How should the WSR be managed to protect and enhance its free flowing condition, water quality, scenery, recreation, and cultural/historical values?

1.3 Decision to Be Made

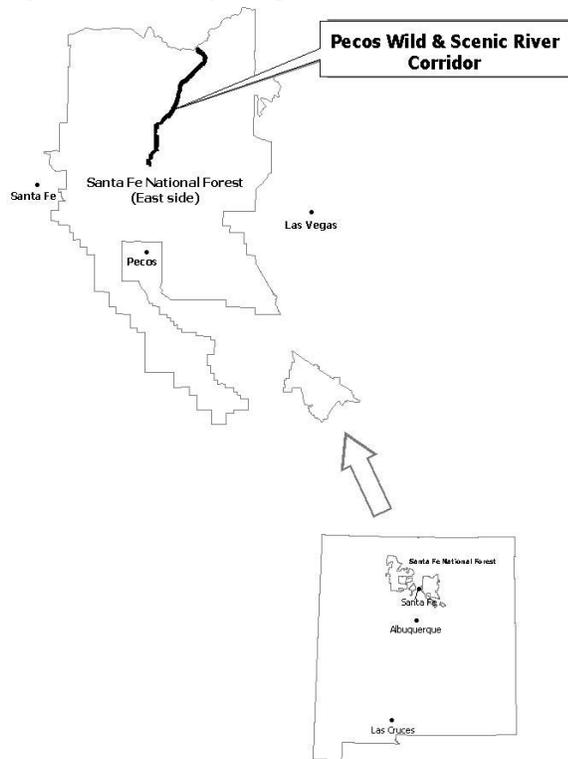
The Forest Supervisor for the Santa Fe National Forest will decide whether or not to adopt the proposed programmatic management direction (Proposed Action), or another alternative described in this EA (No Action, Alternative 1, or Alternative 2). The selected management direction will become the WSR Management Plan and be incorporated into the Forest Plan as standards and guidelines for the new management area F- Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The decision to be made does not include authorizing implementation of any ground-disturbing actions. Project implementation decisions will be made through subsequent NEPA environmental analysis, public involvement, and decision-making processes.

1.4 Background

In 1968 Congress enacted the WSR Act establishing a system for preserving outstanding free-flowing rivers. As defined in Section 1(b) of the WSR Act: "...certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations" (PL 90-542, 1968). The Pecos River was first identified as a potential WSR in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory published by the National Park Service in 1982. In 1990, an amendment to the Act designated the WSR, consisting of 20.5 miles of the upper Pecos River, from its headwaters in the Pecos Wilderness to the town site of Terrero (Public Law 101-306, in Appendix A of this EA).

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



1.5 Location and WSR Boundary

The WSR is located in San Miguel and Mora Counties in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico, approximately eleven miles north of the town of Pecos (see Figure 1). Elevations range from 8,000 to nearly 12,000 feet above sea level. It is located in portions of

Township 18 North, Range 12 East, Sections 3, 10, 15, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33.
Township 19 North, Range 12 East, Sections 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 34, and 35.
Townships 19 & 20 North, Range 13 East (unsurveyed portion of Pecos Wilderness).

When the Pecos WSR was designated in 1990, the interim corridor boundary was described as being ¼ mile from each side of the river. In conformance with Section 3b of the WSR Act, a detailed boundary was developed as part of the planning and public involvement process, transmitted to the US Senate and House of Representatives, and published in the Federal Register on March 24, 2000. The final boundary approximates the ¼-mile distance on each side of the river, with adjustments made to follow subdivision and legal landlines. The WSR corridor averages no more than 320 acres per river mile, as required by the WSR Act.

1.6 Land Jurisdictions and Management Authorities

The Forest Service manages 92% of the land in the WSR corridor, the State manages 6%, and 2% is privately owned (See Table 1). As the lead federal agency responsible for managing the WSR, the Forest Service is responsible for providing direction on National Forest System lands and establishing a framework for river protection in cooperation with other federal, state, local agencies and private landowners on non-federal lands within the corridor (based on Section 10 (d) of the WSR Act, 36 CFR Section 261.58(z), and related case law).

Table 1 - Ownership

Ownership	Corridor Acres	% of Acres
Forest Service	5,389	92
State of NM	372	6
Private	136	2
Total (All Lands)	5897	100

In addition to the Forest Service, a number of other governmental agencies have regulatory or administrative jurisdiction over portions of the river corridor. Some have plans, programs or policies that may be affected by the WSR Management Plan, and these agencies were consulted during the planning process. The following is a summary of agencies with jurisdictional authority related to management in the WSR corridor.

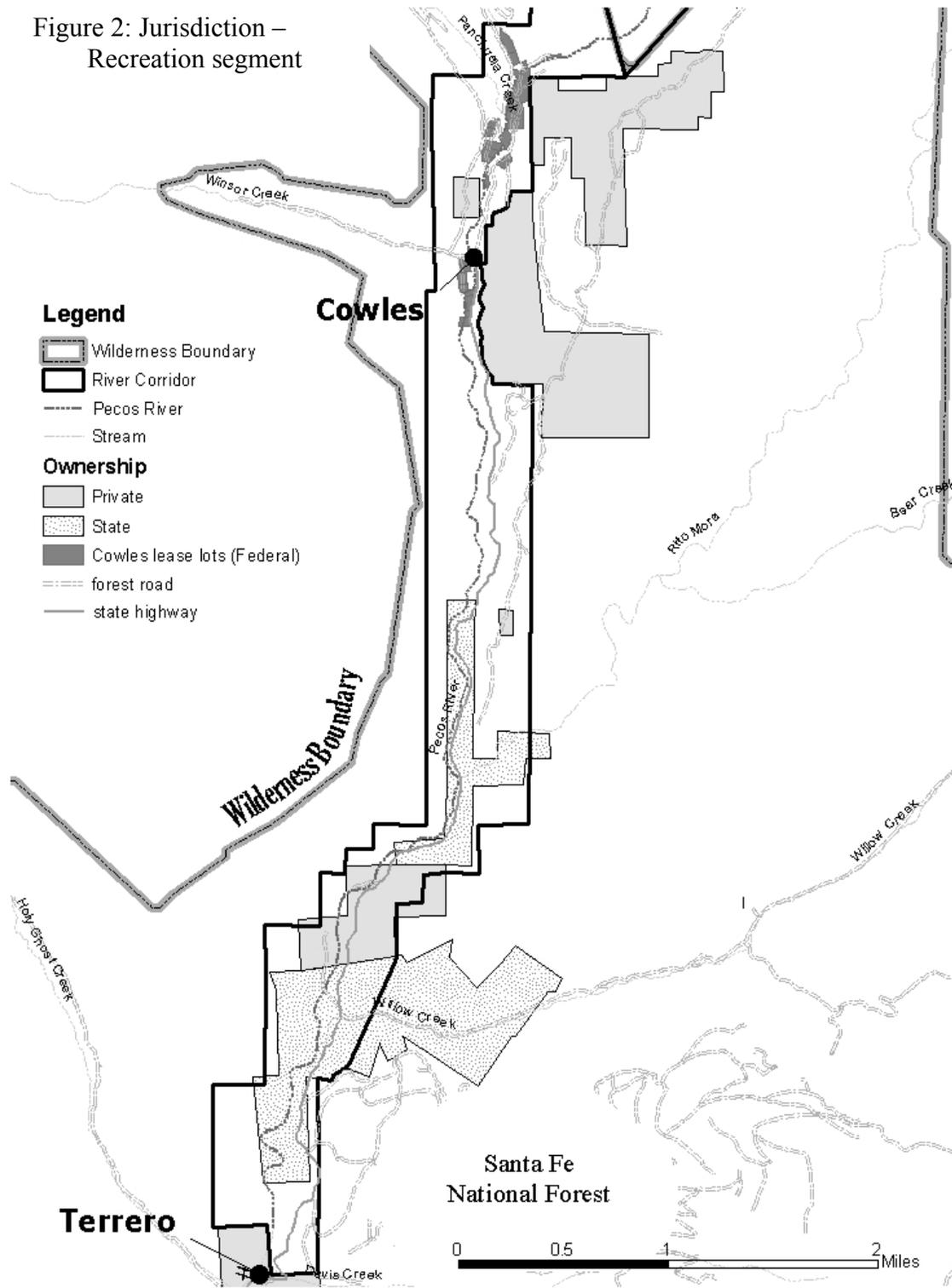
- US Army Corps of Engineers is the federal agency that regulates, through permits, structures and activities that may affect a river's free-flowing condition.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is the federal agency charged with administering the Endangered Species Act. The Forest Service must consult with FWS in evaluating the effects of management activities on threatened and endangered species or habitats.
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMG&F) manages recreation sites on department owned land within the Recreational segment, and is responsible for managing fish and wildlife populations throughout the corridor. Section 10(e) of the WSR Act

encourages states to cooperate in the planning and administration of the WSR where State lands are involved.

- New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), Surface Water Bureau has regulatory authority over activities that affect water quality. Section 12 (c) of the WSR Act directs the river-administering agency to cooperate with this department for the purpose of “eliminating or diminishing the pollution of the waters of the river.” NMED’s Mining Environmental Compliance Division also provides oversight on the Terrero Mine remediation.
- New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division administers the State Forest Conservation Act for timber harvest on private lands within the corridor and assists landowners in managing timber resources.
- New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office is responsible for the administration of State and federal laws that provide protection for historic and prehistoric properties.
- New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (NMSH&TD) is responsible for maintenance of State Highway 63, which runs through the corridor from Terrero to Cowles.
- San Miguel County Planning and Zoning Commission administers County regulations applicable to private lands within the Recreational segment of the corridor. [Mora County overlaps the Wild segment where there are no private lands].

Figure 2: Jurisdiction – Recreation segment on page 5 illustrates the differences in land management jurisdictions in the Recreational segment of the WSR corridor. State and private lands are shaded, and the remaining (unshaded) areas are under Forest Service jurisdiction. The Wild segment, within the Pecos Wilderness, is entirely under Forest Service jurisdiction. In addition, the Figure 2 shows the location of town sites, creeks, and Cowles lease lots within the corridor.

Figure 2: Jurisdiction –
Recreation segment



1.7 WSR Segments

The WSR segments were classified using criteria from the Department of Agriculture's Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification and Management of River Areas such as: accessibility, developments along the shoreline, presence or absence of impoundments, and water quality (DOI/DOA 1982). Results of the eligibility study are summarized in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Forest Plan, Appendix D, page 335 (USDA-FS 1987a).

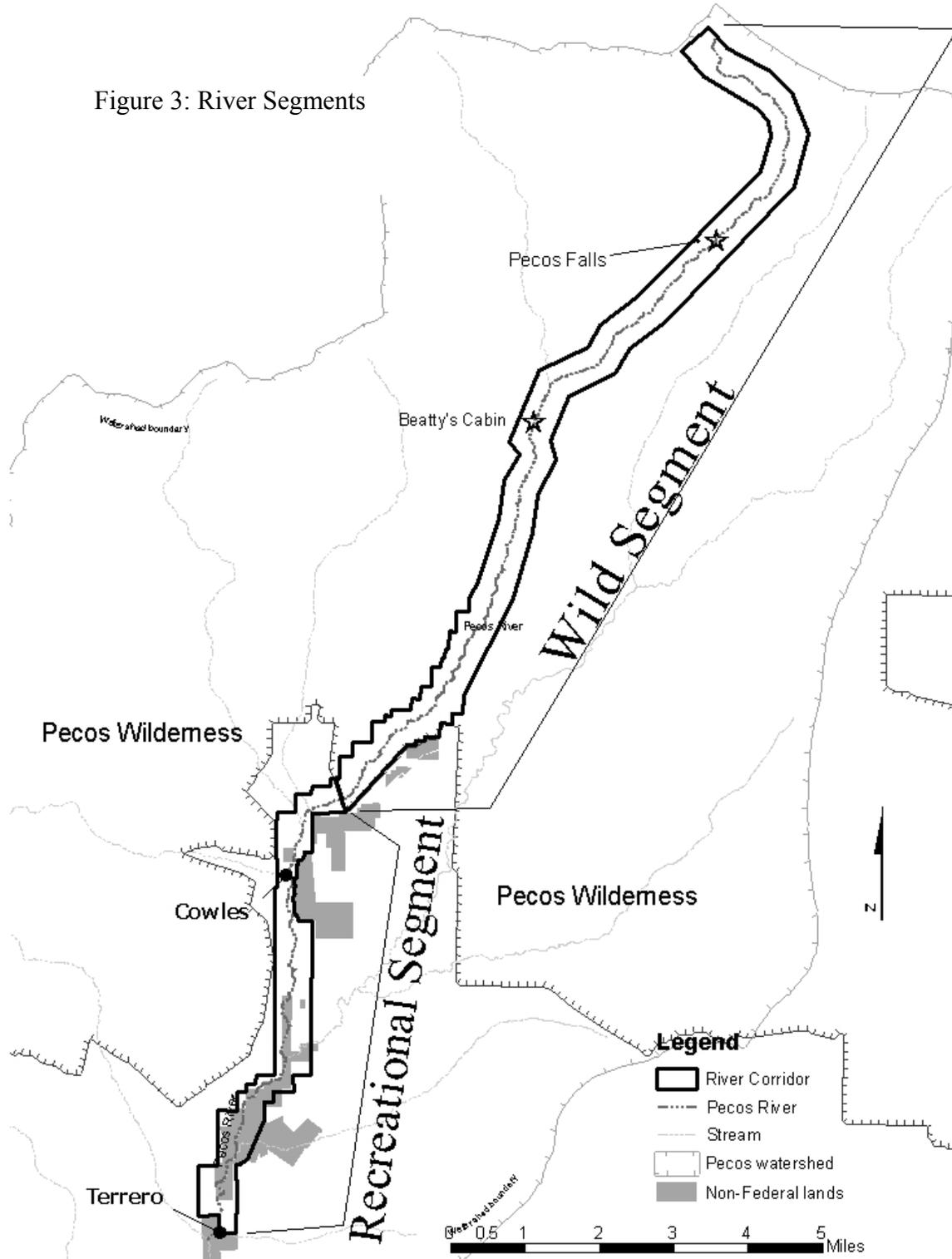
The two segments of the Pecos WSR are classified as follows (PL 90-542, Section 3a) See Figure 3: River Segments on page 7.

Wild – 13.5-mile segment within the Pecos Wilderness, extending from the river's headwaters downstream to the Wilderness boundary

Recreational – 7-mile segment from the Wilderness boundary to the town site of Terrero.

The Wild segment flows through steep canyons with large boulders and high stream gradients. It has no stream bank modifications and limited trail access. In contrast, the Recreational segment is characterized by low stream gradients and has some modifications and cabin developments along the shoreline. The paved road that generally parallels the river throughout this segment provides easy access for recreational activities. This WSR is entirely free of impoundments.

Figure 3: River Segments



1.8 Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Sections 1b and 10a of the WSR Act require protection of the river's free-flowing conditions, water quality and outstandingly remarkable values. The river values for which this river was designated are scenery, recreation and cultural/historic sites (USDA-FS 1987a); each is briefly described in the following sub-sections and discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Scenic Values

Scenic values for which the river was designated include the rugged canyons, waterfalls, and high mountain meadows (USDA-FS 1987a). The distinctive landscape of pine and spruce forests, patches of aspen trees, large boulder outcrops, wildflowers, and clear water cascading through the narrow valley have attracted people to the area for many years. In the autumn, the aspen turns a vivid golden yellow. Panoramic views are found near the headwaters of the Pecos River. In



the Wild segment, the river begins as a high mountain stream, later becoming an array of shallow rapids, churning eddies, and multiple cascades. In the Recreational segment, the meandering water through the canyon provides a unique feature in contrast with the arid plains to the east and south. The few structures in the Beatty's flat area and most cabins within the corridor are rustic in character and blend in with the landscape.

Recreational Values

Recreational values for which the river was designated include those associated with the Wilderness and one of the state's most popular trout fishing streams (USDA-FS 1987a). The WSR corridor has long been a destination for visitors from the region, as well as from around the country. Local users have multi-generational family gatherings near the water. The natural setting of the river is an important attraction and provides a cool alternative to surrounding lower elevation, arid environments. The

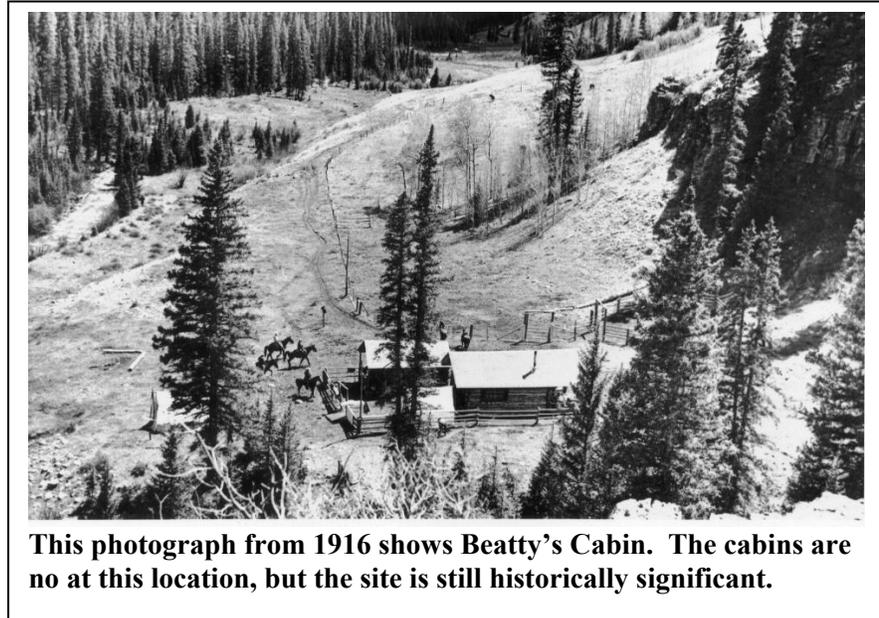


river's cascading flow is inviting to anglers while many other people come simply to be near the water. Use is particularly high in the summer; visitors often stay for days or weeks.

Popular activities along the entire WSR corridor include hiking, camping, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, water play, photography and sightseeing. Opportunities abound for remote, primitive activities in the Wild segment. For visitors seeking a more developed, less isolated setting, the Recreational segment offers a range of day and overnight activities.

Cultural/ Historic Values

Cultural/ historic values for which the river was designated include those associated with the historic home site of George Beatty, famed trapper, prospector, and mountain man (USDA-FS 1987a). In the past, much as today, people settled near the river. Prehistoric uses during the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Basketmaker and Puebloan periods likely involved hunting, fishing, gathering herbs and other plants, and some farming, all adding to the cultural context of the corridor.



Historically, the area is very rich. As early as 1600, Spanish explorers began scouting the upper Pecos river valley for mineral wealth. With the coming of more permanent European and Hispanic settlers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, grazing, logging, hunting, trapping and mining increased. Most historic sites recorded in the area lie outside the Wilderness boundary and consist of trash scatters with or without structural remains dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Adding to the historic values of the area are early 20th century acequias, cemeteries, sawmills, cabins, and campground structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

1.9 The 1968 WSR Act as amended

The 1968 WSR Act (Public Law 90-542) describes requirements for designation and management of rivers in the WSR system. The 1990 addendum (PL 101-306) established the Pecos WSR and its associated segment classifications. Section 10a of the Act states that management plans establish varying degrees of intensity for WSR protection and development based on special attributes of the area. The act also allows the Secretary of Agriculture to use the general statutory authorities relating to the National Forests in such a manner as is deemed

appropriate to carry out the purposes of the WSR Act (section 10(d)). Section 10(e) and 11 (b)(1) contain policies that encourage cooperative agreements between agencies as appropriate for protecting WSR values, and allows for easements to be granted through WSR corridors. Sections 6 and 14 address land donations, leases, and land acquisition.

The WSR Act prohibits federal agencies from construction of any water resources projects that would have a direct and adverse effect on the river's free-flowing condition, water quality, or river values. The WSR Act also provides a standard that governs water resources projects proposed below, above or on any stream tributary to the designated river.

Requirements from the WSR Act are not repeated in the standards and guidelines, but will be summarized and incorporated by reference into the Forest Plan, for management area F- Wild and Scenic Rivers.

1.10 Relationship to Other Laws, Regulations, Policies and the Forest Plan

The 1982 US Department of Interior and the US Department of Agriculture guidelines for WSRs contain general management principles (policies) regarding development of the management plan, user capacity, public use and access, basic and major facilities, motorized travel, agricultural and forestry practices, other resource management practices, water quality, land acquisition, mining, management of adjacent federal lands, hunting and fishing, rights-of-way and land use controls (Federal Register 1982).

The Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2354, July 1994, provides additional policies for administration of WSRs. The FSM 2354.3 provides guidance on developing management plans to protect and enhance values, with detail on managing recreation and other uses.

The current Forest Plan provides management direction for the WSR including the goal: "Manage the three rivers (Chama, East Fork Jemez, and Pecos) recommended for inclusion in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System to maintain or enhance the values for which they were included. Maintain the rivers' free-flowing character while providing quality water-based recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat improvement, and other resource management, consistent with the intent of the 1968 Wild & Scenic Rivers Act" (USDA-FS 1987b: p. 19). The Forest Plan also provides standards and guidelines for managing the WSRs, including "Manage these rivers in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values for which they were classified as eligible... In order to maintain these characteristics, manage the river corridors in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Chapter 8, Section 8.2 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.12."

The WSR falls within two existing Forest Plan Management Areas. The Wild segment is within a portion of Management Area H, congressionally designated Wilderness. Management in this area must emphasize preservation of wilderness character and values, and primitive recreational opportunities. Limited and controlled livestock grazing is allowed to occur within this area. The Recreational segment is within a portion of Management Area D, a transportation corridor with an emphasis on enhancing visual quality and developed recreational opportunities. Existing direction for Management Areas D and H can be found in the Forest Plan on pages 125-129, 131-134, and 112-116.

1.11 Public Involvement and Project Chronology to Date

In 1991, the Forest Service began developing the Pecos WSR Management Plan. Government agencies and interested citizens were contacted through mailings, an open house, personal phone calls and meetings, and news releases in local newspapers. Seventy-five written comments were received and served as a basis for defining the current situation, issues, and possible new management direction. A draft Management Plan, Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Notice were completed in September 1993. The decision however, was withdrawn after an internal review because the plan did not adequately address the Cowles lease lots in the corridor.

In 1996, the project was restarted with more public involvement and analysis regarding the Cowles leases. The Forest Service continued to use phone calls, written correspondence and meetings with interested and affected citizens throughout the remainder of the planning process. In December 1998, the EA was released for public review and comment. In January 1999 the Forest Supervisor signed a decision that adopted Alternative 2 as the final management plan. In March 1999 a number of appeals were filed. They came from Cowles leaseholders and Forest Guardians, an environmental group that objected to allowing livestock grazing within the corridor. The Southwestern Regional Forester remanded the EA and Decision Notice (DN) back to the Forest Supervisor for revision.

1.12 Key Issues

Based on a review of comments received throughout the eleven-year planning process, three key issues have been identified. These issues reflect concerns, debates or disagreements about effects of the Proposed Action. These issues were used to develop Alternatives 1 and 2.

Issue: Recreational Opportunities

The proposed limitations on camping, parking, off-road driving and other activities would reduce recreational opportunities along the river. People may be dissatisfied and possibly displaced to other locations. Displacing people from their favorite riverside places may cause over-use in upland areas within the WSR corridor or along rivers or streams outside the corridor.

Issue: Recreational Impacts

The proposed limitations on recreational and other uses still allow some camping, fishing, motorized uses, and other recreational activities. These activities may result in localized problems with improper disposal of trash and human waste, soil compaction and loss of ground vegetation, or disturbance to wildlife habitat, rare plants or archaeological sites.

Issue: Livestock Impacts

The Proposed Action allows limited livestock grazing to continue in the Wild segment. Cattle grazing may detract from recreational values, mainly when people encounter cattle and cattle manure along trails and at dispersed recreation sites. There has also been some controversy and debate about whether cattle in the Wild segment cause localized impacts to the abundance or diversity of native plant species, stream bank stability or water quality.

Other concerns raised:

A number of concerns about potential effects to water quality, river values and other natural resources were expressed. These were addressed by the Proposed Action, which directs recreational uses, parking, camping, motorized/non-motorized uses, and vegetation manipulation.

Concerns considered outside the scope of this proposal related to situations that do not affect resources in the corridor, and concerns already addressed by existing law, regulation or policy. One such issue was discussed at length in the previous EA (circulated for public comment in 1999). The Cowles leaseholders expressed a desire to continue their occupancy of leased cabins beyond the expiration date on the leases. The Forest Service determined that it has no authority to continue these leases because it violates policy against sole occupancy, and the intent of the acquisition was to clear the land of improvements when the leases expire. (See the Project Record for additional information about how public comments were addressed, such as the 1999 EA Appendix).

Finally, some people were concerned about how their existing water rights would be affected. However, in-stream flows sufficient to protect aquatic and riparian ecosystems are likely to continue in perpetuity due to land ownership patterns. Nonetheless, the United States is seeking a decreed reserve water right for in-stream flow under the WSR Act. The evaluation of this claim is outside the scope of this analysis. Most of the Pecos River basin water rights have been adjudicated, and there are no unresolved competing claims for the water within the boundaries of the National Forest.

Chapter 2. Alternatives

2.1 Introduction

The Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2 were developed to meet the purpose of and need for action by meeting requirements from statutes, regulations and agency directives for managing WSRs. They define long-term, programmatic standards and guidelines for how the WSR should be managed to protect and enhance river values. The alternatives differ in how they address the key planning question and key issues (refer to Chapter 1).

The proposed programmatic management direction described in this chapter adds to, or in the case of Management area D, replaces sections of the existing Forest Plan standards and guidelines. It does not replace those covering uses in the Wilderness (and the Wild segment of the WSR). Refer to the project record for a copy of the WSR Act and relevant Forest Plan direction. Also refer to applicable agency directives in the Forest Service Manual and Handbook, and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Reference Guide of the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (IWSRCC, 2002).

Although on-the-ground management actions that may be implemented are included in the WSR Management Plan, those actions are not the subject of this environmental analysis. Those site-specific, ground-disturbing actions will require additional analysis and public involvement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before they can be implemented.

In this EA, the Proposed Action was chosen as the Agency's *preferred alternative* because it best meets the purpose of and need for action. It is the foundation for the WSR Management Plan.

2.2 Descriptions of Alternatives

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, there would be no change from current management practices for the WSR and the Forest Service would not be in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The No Action Alternative is required by law and provides a baseline from which to compare the action alternatives.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would implement the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and adopt a comprehensive management plan as an amendment to the Forest Plan. In the Recreational segment, the Forest Service proposes to designate day use areas, parking, campgrounds, and dispersed campsites; prohibit floating on the river; prohibit driving off of roads; and allow harvesting or prescribed burning only to maintain, protect, or enhance the river values for which the river was designated.

Alternative 1 – Maintain Riverside Recreational Opportunities

Alternative 1 responds to the issue of Recreational Opportunities (section 1.12) by allowing camping, parking, and off-road driving everywhere except in riparian areas or where they would pose a safety hazard. Along the entire corridor, floating on the river would be allowed.

Alternative 2 – Further Control Land Use

Alternative 2 responds to the issue of Recreational Impacts (section 1.12) by restricting camping and parking to developed sites only, prohibiting driving off of roads and floating on the river, requiring backcountry use permits, and limiting outfitter-guide permits to current permittees.

No Cattle Grazing Option

This option responds to the separate issue of Livestock Impacts (section 1.12) by prohibiting cattle grazing entirely within the corridor.

2.3 Management Direction *Common to all Action Alternatives*

This section lists new standards and guidelines that would be the same for all the action alternatives. For the Recreational segment, the new standards and guidelines would replace the following direction from Management Area D: A08 (p. 113); D01, D02, D07, G01, G04 (p. 115); and L01, L04, L08, L12, L19 (p.116). The remaining standards and guidelines for Management Area D (pp. 112-116) would be incorporated into this new Management Area F, and Management Area D would no longer apply to the WSR corridor. For the Wild segment, the new standards and guidelines would supplement existing standards and guidelines for Management Area H, Wilderness, which would continue to apply within the Wilderness (Forest Plan, pp. 125 – 129, 132 – 134). In addition to the new and existing management area direction, all of the forest-wide goals, standards and guidelines from the Forest Plan would also continue to apply to the corridor.

Recreation

At high-use sites in the Recreational segment, ensure that toilets and trash facilities are available and maintained to agency standards.

Utilize partnerships with interested organizations to help maintain trails, clean up along the river, and rehabilitate damaged areas.

In the Recreational segment, designate parking areas that allow public access to the river while protecting natural resources.

Provide thirty days advance public notice when issuing special orders for recreation or other uses, other than for emergency orders. Special orders should be supported by appropriate design, education, and enforcement.

Trails

In the Recreational segment, provide trails (and trail bridges over streams) as needed to direct use, reduce resource impacts, and increase user satisfaction. Provide trails that incorporate Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines and access the river. In the Wild segment, provide a safe way for people to cross the river, consistent with protecting water quality and scenic values, and in accordance with Forest Service Manual direction.

Relocate, eliminate, or rehabilitate user-created trails that are causing adverse impacts to soil, water, fisheries, wildlife, or other resources. Adopt and maintain other user-created trails where compatible with river management objectives.

Scenery

Plan, design, and implement all management activities to be consistent with the Scenic Integrity Objective of “Very High” in the Wild segment and “High” in the Recreational segment¹. Follow guidelines in *Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management* (or other current guides) for all management activities in the WSR corridor.

Design facilities and structures to have a natural, rustic appearance. Emphasize use of native or natural materials such as rock, logs, and indigenous plants.

In the Recreational segment, design silvicultural activities such as thinning, revegetation, restoration, and reforestation to enhance scenic diversity in the landscape by having a variety of tree sizes, spacing, and densities.

In the Recreational segment, manage for a Recreation Opportunity Setting (ROS) of Roaded Natural along road corridors and Rural surrounding developed sites. In the Wild segment, manage for an ROS of Primitive.

Interpretation & Information

Provide information at strategic locations within the corridor, such as at trailheads, to inform the public of WSR designations; camping, hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle use, and picnicking opportunities; proper disposal of trash and human waste; animal control; wilderness ethics; and Leave No Trace techniques.

Roads and Bridges

No new system roads will be constructed unless needed to access recreation sites and private property, for authorized special uses, or for administrative actions needed to protect river values.

¹ The Very High and High Scenic Integrity Objectives from the new scenery management system classification correspond, respectively, to the former Visual Quality Objectives of Preservation and Retention.

To enhance safety along Highway 63, coordinate with NMSH&TD to discourage people from walking in travel lanes or parking on the shoulder of the highway.

In the Recreational segment, limit construction or re-construction of private bridges on National Forest System lands to situations where it is the only reasonable means of access to private property.

Repair or replace existing bridges over streams to meet safety standards, protect river resources and maintain free-flowing conditions.

Minimize the miles of open road and number of bridges while still providing adequate access to popular recreation sites, private lands, and to meet resource management needs.

Cultural/Historic (Heritage Resources)

Use education and interpretation as the primary means of protecting heritage resources.

Lands and Special Uses

Manage Cowles lease sites to protect and enhance WSR values. In areas where Cowles leases have expired, remove cabin structures and manage those sites for recovery and maintenance of native vegetation that blends with the surrounding landscape.

Permit commercial and non-commercial special uses only if they are consistent with Forest Service Manual direction and would not result in long-term impairment of water quality, free-flowing condition, or river values.

Interagency Cooperation

Develop cooperative management and/or cost-sharing agreements with NMG&F to provide consistent management of resources and facilities in the Recreational segment regardless of jurisdiction.

In the Recreational segment, work with NMG&F to re-direct dispersed camping in riparian areas to upland sites or outside of the corridor. Revegetate closed sites.

Recommend that San Miguel County amend their Comprehensive Land Use Plan to include the Recreational segment of the corridor as a “cultural zone,” containing direction on minimum lot size, building setbacks, agricultural uses, septic system guidelines, and floodplain restrictions to consistently protect river values.

Work with San Miguel County and NMG&F to have interagency reviews of all Forest Service, State, and County land use planning documents regarding the Recreational segment of the corridor.

Water, Riparian, Fish, and Wildlife

Maintain the Pecos River's designated use as a "high quality coldwater fisheries".

Evaluate proposed construction projects in the corridor against Section 7 of the WSR Act to ensure that there would be "no direct and adverse effect on the values for which the river was designated," and follow applicable procedures in the Forest Service Manual.

Restore or maintain riparian and stream conditions in accordance with properly functioning condition guidelines, including those for sediment, large woody debris, pool development, pool quality, width-depth ratios, and stream-bank stability.

Revegetate stream banks with native vegetation.

Prohibit removal of large woody debris from the river, as well as cutting snags and down logs.

Fish habitat structures will be constructed and maintained to simulate natural processes, use native materials, maintain the river's free flowing condition, and meet Section 7 requirements if applicable. In addition, in the Wild segment, follow applicable Forest Service Manual direction.

In cooperation with NMG&F, work toward reintroduction of Rio Grande cutthroat trout and other native fisheries while retaining recreational fishing opportunities.

In the Wild segment, work with NMG&F to evaluate over-utilization of forage due to elk grazing and assist in correcting the situation, such as through a reduction in elk numbers on a localized basis.

Vegetation

Allow harvesting and prescribed burning in the Recreational segment only when the primary purpose is to reduce the risk of severe damage by insects, disease, or high-intensity crown fires, or otherwise protect water quality and river values

In the Recreational segment, promote restoration of vegetative productivity, such as by planting riparian species, thinning overly dense conifer stands, regenerating aspen, and controlling competing, non-native vegetation.

In the Recreational segment, manage for natural regeneration of trees and shrubs whenever possible. If reforestation is necessary, use conifer seedlings grown from the local seed zone.

When treating noxious weeds, utilize mechanical or biological methods rather than herbicides unless it is predicted that those methods will be ineffective and the long-term benefits of herbicide use outweigh potential short-term impacts to the river values and water quality.

Fire and Fuels

Allow natural fires to burn in the Wild segment unless they threaten the long-term integrity of water quality and WSR values. High-intensity crown fire may be allowed to burn in the Wild segment, allowing for vegetation type conversion within the natural range of variability.

Limit fire suppression methods to those that will not have long-term adverse impacts to water quality and river values. In the Wild segment, aerial retardants should not be used unless deemed necessary to mitigate the threat of long-term impacts to water quality, river values, or human health and safety.

In the Recreational segment, maintain low fuel loadings around developed and designated dispersed camping sites. Design vegetation and fuels management activities to minimize the risk of high-intensity crown fires, using methods that emphasize long-term protection of water quality and river values.

Grazing

In the Recreational segment, limit horse grazing to the uplands above the Highway 63-fenceline.

In the Wild segment where both cattle and horses are allowed to graze, adhere to the environmental protection standards for Management Area H-Wilderness, as well as utilization standards identified in Allotment Management Plans and Annual Operating Instructions.

Under the No Cattle Grazing Option: Prohibit cattle grazing within the WSR corridor, while permitting cattle to trail through the corridor when moving cattle through the allotment.

2.4 Management Direction that *Differs* Between Alternatives

Proposed Action

Recommend that NMSH&TD maintain Forest Road 555/State Highway 63 as a narrow two-lane road.

Recommend that NMG&F extend the length of the Special Trout Waters designation (bag limit of 2 fish, 12 inch minimum), from ½ mile above the confluence with Mora Creek to the bridge on Trail 397.

In the Recreational segment, prohibit all off-road use of motorized vehicles, and recommend that NMG&F implement the same prohibition on their lands in the corridor.

In the Recreational segment, limit camping to developed and designated dispersed sites, and limit parking to designated sites.

Prohibit the use of rafts, boats, or other conveyances to float down the river.

Alternative 1 – Maintain Riverside Recreational Opportunities

Recommend that NMSH&TD widen or upgrade Road 555/State Highway 63.

In the Recreational segment, provide enough designated parking spaces to accommodate use.

In the Recreational segment, allow off-road use of motorized vehicles except in riparian areas or on system trails.

Allow dispersed camping throughout the corridor except in riparian areas.

Alternative 2 – Further Control Land Use

Recommend that NMSH&TD maintain Forest Road 555/State Highway 63 as a narrow two-lane road.

Recommend that NMG&F extend the length of the Special Trout Waters designation (bag limit of 2 fish, 12 inch minimum) to cover the WSR from Terrero to Pecos Falls (above which is designated as a Catch and Release zone).

In the Recreational segment, limit camping to developed sites and parking to designated sites. Convert dispersed campsites to parking areas, or revegetate.

In the Recreational segment, prohibit off-road use of motorized vehicles, and recommend that NMG&F implement the same prohibition on their lands in the corridor.

Eliminate and rehabilitate all user-created trails.

Prohibit the use of rafts, boats or other conveyances to float down the river.

Require a backcountry use permit to enter the Wild segment.

No new outfitter guide permits will be issued. Existing outfitter guide permits may be reissued, but user days will not exceed previous use levels.

2.3 Comparison of Alternatives

Table 2 – Comparison of allowable and prohibited uses between alternatives.

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maintain Recreation Opportunities	Alternative 2 Further Control Land Use
Camping	Recreational segment	Occurs in all accessible areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed only in developed sites from the Wilderness boundary to Willow Creek Allowed only in developed or designated dispersed sites from Willow Creek to Terrero 	Allowed everywhere except in riparian areas	Allowed only in developed sites (no dispersed camping)
	Wild segment	Prohibited at Pecos Falls and Beatty’s Flats and within 50 feet of the river	Prohibited at Pecos Falls and Beatty’s Flats and within 50 feet of the river	Prohibited at Pecos Falls and Beatty’s Flats and within 50 feet of the river	Prohibited at Pecos Falls and Beatty’s Flats and within 50 feet of the river
Day use areas	Recreational segment	Cowles Pond is the only designated day use area; no restrictions on other day use in the corridor	Designates more day use areas	Cowles Pond is the only designated day use area; no restrictions on other day use in the corridor	Creates additional day use areas by converting designated camping areas to day use only
	Wild segment	No designated day use areas; no restrictions on day use	No designated day use areas; no restrictions on day use	No designated day use areas; no restrictions on day use	No designated day use areas; no restrictions on day use
Parking	Recreational segment	Occurs in all accessible areas	Allowed only in designated areas	Allowed everywhere except in riparian areas or where it poses a safety hazard	Allowed only in designated areas
	Wild segment	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maintain Recreation Opportunities	Alternative 2 Further Control Land Use
Trails	Recreational segment	Users create trails along the river	Closes or repairs only those user-created trails impacting the resource	Closes or repairs only those user-created trails impacting the resource	Closes or rehabilitates all user-created trails
	Wild segment	Users create trails along the river	Closes or repairs only those user-created trails impacting the resource	Closes or repairs only those user-created trails impacting the resource	Closes or rehabilitates all user-created trails
Floating on the river	Recreational segment	Allowed but generally does not occur	Prohibited	Allowed	Prohibited
	Wild segment	Allowed but generally does not occur	Prohibited	Allowed	Prohibited
Off-road vehicle use	Recreational segment	Not prohibited	Prohibited	Allowed outside of riparian areas	Prohibited
	Wild segment	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Outfitter guides	Recreational segment	May issue new permits	May issue new permits	May issue new permits	No new permits issued and user days remain at existing levels
	Wild segment	Moratorium in place prohibiting new permits and keeping user days at current levels	Moratorium in place prohibiting new permits and keeping user days at current levels	Moratorium in place prohibiting new permits and keeping user days at current levels	Moratorium in place prohibiting new permits and keeping user days at current levels

2.5 Comparison of Effects of Alternatives

This table briefly summarizes the effects of alternatives with respect to protecting water quality, free-flowing conditions, and river values; it also displays how well the alternatives address the key issues identified in Chapter 1. This table is based on Chapter 3, which describes the effects of each alternative in detail. It provides a basis for choice between the alternatives.

Table 3 - Comparison of Effects between Alternatives

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maint. Rec. Opp.	Alternative 2 Further Control Use	No Grazing Option	With Grazing
River Value	Segment						
Scenery	Recreational	Some foreground areas along the river and road are heavily altered and do not have high scenic integrity; middle ground does have high integrity	Scenic integrity in most of the foreground would be high; middle ground would have high scenic integrity	Scenic integrity in riparian areas would be high; the rest of the foreground along the river and road would have some heavily altered areas; middle ground would have high scenic integrity	Scenic integrity in the entire foreground along the river and road would be high; middle ground would have high scenic integrity	No effect	No effect
	Wild	Scenic integrity is very high; landscape appears unaltered	Scenic integrity is very high; landscape appears unaltered	Scenic integrity is very high; landscape appears unaltered	Scenic integrity is very high; landscape appears unaltered	No effect	No effect
Recreation	Recreational	Ample recreational opportunities exist; much camping and parking is dispersed or uncontrolled; opportunities for off-road vehicle use exist	Ample recreational opportunities exist; all camping and parking is designated; no opportunity for off-road vehicle use exists	Abundant recreational opportunities exist; much camping and parking is dispersed or uncontrolled; opportunities for off-road vehicle use exist	Primary form of recreation would be day use; camping in developed sites only; no opportunity for off-road vehicle use exist	No effect	No effect

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maint. Rec. Opp.	Alternative 2 Further Control Use	No Grazing Option	With Grazing
	Wild	Ample recreational opportunities exist	Ample recreational opportunities exist	Ample recreational opportunities exist	Ample recreational opportunities exist	No effect	No effect
Cultural/ Historic	Recreational	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; risk of damage from recreational uses (camping, off-road vehicles, user-created trails)	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; little risk of damage from recreational uses	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; risk of damage from recreational uses (camping, off-road vehicles, user-created trails)	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; little risk of damage from recreational uses	No effect	No effect
	Wild	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; no risk of damage from cattle	Pre-historic and historic cultural sites are intact; little risk of damage from cattle
Water Quality	Recreational	Water quality is good to excellent; fully supports designated uses; slight risk of impairment due to recreational activities	Water quality is good to excellent; fully supports designated uses; almost no risk of impairment due to recreational activities	Water quality is good to excellent; fully supports designated uses; slight risk of impairment due to recreational activities	Water quality is good to excellent; fully supports designated uses; almost no risk of impairment due to recreational activities	No effect	No effect
	Wild	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses	Water quality is excellent; fully supports designated uses

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maint. Rec. Opp.	Alternative 2 Further Control Use	No Grazing Option	With Grazing
Free-flowing	Recreational	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	No effect	No effect
	Wild	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	River is free-flowing	No effect	No effect
Key Issues							
Recreational opportunities	Recreational	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	Recreational opportunities exist, but camping and parking is limited and off-road vehicle use is prohibited	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	Recreation is mostly day use	No effect	No effect
	Wild	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	Recreational opportunities of all kinds exist	No effect	No effect
Recreational impacts	Recreational	Some riparian areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy	Few areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy; many sites are recovering	Some riparian areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy	No areas are heavily impacted; some areas are lightly impacted and/or recovering; most of corridor is healthy	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Wild	Few areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy	Few areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy	Few areas are heavily impacted; most of corridor is healthy	No areas are heavily impacted; some areas are lightly impacted and/or recovering; most of corridor is healthy	Not applicable	Not applicable
Livestock	Recreational	No impacts from cattle grazing; horses may be seen grazing on small portions	Negligible impacts from cattle grazing; horses may be seen grazing on small portion	Negligible impacts from cattle grazing; horses may be seen grazing on small portion	Negligible impacts from cattle grazing; horses may be seen grazing on small portion	No impacts from cattle or horse grazing	Negligible impacts from cattle grazing; horses may be seen grazing on small portion

		No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative 1 Maint. Rec. Opp.	Alternative 2 Further Control Use	No Grazing Option	With Grazing
impacts	Wild	Negligible impact from cattle or horse grazing on water quality & riparian condition; cattle and horses are very seldom seen in the corridor	Negligible impact from cattle or horse grazing on water quality & riparian condition; cattle and horses are very seldom seen in the corridor	Negligible impact from cattle or horse grazing on water quality & riparian condition; cattle and horses are very seldom seen in the corridor	Negligible impact from cattle or horse grazing on water quality & riparian condition; cattle and horses are very seldom seen in the corridor	No impacts from cattle or horse grazing	Negligible impact from cattle or horse grazing on water quality & riparian condition; cattle and horses are very seldom seen in the corridor