

## **Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences**

This Chapter describes the affected environment, including the past, on-going and foreseeable future activities relevant to each resource topic, as well as the environmental consequences of each alternative. Cumulative effects for each resource are summarized at the end of this Chapter.

### **3.1 Recreation Uses, Trends and Capacity – Affected Environment**

The WSR corridor has been a popular recreation setting for many decades. Its popularity continues to increase because it provides a cool, forested environment and waterway within the arid southwest; it also offers beautiful scenery and high-quality fishing. Some of the most popular recreation activities are hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting and fishing. The Wild segment is entirely within the Pecos Wilderness and provides opportunities for remote, primitive activities. The Recreational segment is located along State Highway 63 (and Forest Road 555), and offers a range of day and overnight activities from Terrero to Cowles. The corridor is within 1.5 hours drive of Albuquerque, a city of over ½ million people, and less than 1.0 hour from Santa Fe, a city of over 60,000. Visitors generally come from Santa Fe, Sandoval and Bernalillo counties, as well as from Texas, California and many other areas.

The population growth rate for Santa Fe, Sandoval and Bernalillo counties for the past 10 years was approximately 30% (averaging 3% annually; US Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000). In the corridor, all the developed day use sites, campgrounds and dispersed camping areas are filled beyond capacity during peak visitation periods. Thus, the Forest Service does not promote increased recreation use of the corridor.

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment provides sample frequencies and weighted population estimates of Outdoor Recreation Participation in the United States recreation (NSRE 2000). Table 4 shows recreational use in the U.S. Taking these statistics into consideration can help in managing federal lands and meeting visitor expectations.

**Table 4 - Recreational Use in the U.S.**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Use (millions)</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Use (millions)</b>
Picnicking	114	Motorized Vehicle Use	36
Viewing Wildlife	87	Camping at Primitive Sites	36
Day Hiking/Bird Watching/ Visiting Wilderness	69	Fishing in Cold Waters	32
Camping	53	Backpacking	22
Mountain Biking	43	Hunting Big Game/ Small Game	17/14

Capacity, as a concept and term used in recreation management, is considered the upper limit of use that can be sustained while still protecting the area’s natural resources and meeting social expectations of visitors and local residents. “Social capacity” is reached when the recreational opportunity desired by the users in a certain area is unacceptably compromised by high use levels. This capacity level is more difficult to define, because users have widely different expectations for their recreation experience. For example, in the Wild segment, there is an expectation for a primitive Wilderness experience with opportunities for solitude away from crowds and motorized traffic.

Recreational use in the Wild segment is within its environmental capacity. This is due to its remoteness (distance from roads), rugged terrain, limited access along much of the river, existing prohibitions on camping at Beatty’s Flats and Pecos Falls, and limits on group size and outfitter-guide permits (Forest Plan, pp.125-126, 132). From the social expectations standpoint, some users are satisfied with the current level of use and argue for fewer restrictions. Others would like to see current use levels reduced to provide a less crowded experience.

Within the Recreational segment, use currently exceeds environmental capacity in some very accessible areas, while remaining well below capacity in the more inaccessible sections. There are environmental indications of over-use where people most frequently drive, park, camp and walk. Some users are satisfied with the current level of use



**Camping at the Mora campground is too crowded for many people**

and argue for more facilities that would encourage additional use. Others would like to see current use levels reduced to provide a less crowded recreational experience. It is clear from public comments that some users have been displaced to less crowded areas outside the corridor during peak use periods.

Recreational use can often be managed through the dissemination of information. Currently no information regarding the WSR and its management, nor information encouraging visitor responsibility for resource protection, is available. Any signs in the corridor mostly list restricted uses.

## **Recreational Uses, Trends and Capacity – Environmental Consequences**

### No Action

There would be no change from the existing recreational conditions. In the Wild segment, implementation of current management direction would protect and enhance the primitive Wilderness experience within the environmental and social capacity of this segment. In the Recreational segment, the number of days that exceed current capacity would continue to become more frequent at the more popular, accessible sites. Visitor displacement would also increase as people look for other, less crowded areas.

### Proposed Action

Restricting camping and parking in the Recreational segment to developed and designated dispersed sites would reduce capacity within the corridor. Closing and rehabilitating user-created campsites would improve the apparent naturalness of the Recreational segment. Designating parking would reduce traffic congestion and would improve the apparent naturalness along Highway 63. As the plan is implemented, visitors must camp in developed sites and pay a fee. This would displace some visitors and change use patterns within and outside the corridor. Additional user-created, dispersed camping sites would be created outside the corridor.

Floating can only be done in short sections of the river during periods of high water flow, which does not commonly occur. Prohibiting floating would therefore not be expected to displace many users, and it would enhance fishing within the corridor.

By eliminating off-road driving, motorized users would be displaced. These users would probably find another place to ride vehicles outside the corridor or on NMG&F land, thereby impacting other areas. Rehabilitating user-created roads would increase vegetation cover, which would improve the apparent naturalness of the Recreational segment.

### Alternative 1

Allowing camping everywhere except riparian areas would create impacts associated with dispersed areas, such as denuded stream banks and compacted soils.

Correspondingly, allowing parking everywhere except riparian areas would eliminate ground vegetation and detract from the apparent naturalness of the area. Off-road drivers would still be able to use most of the area, so would not be displaced to other areas.

### Alternative 2

As user-created campsites and parking areas are closed and rehabilitated, there would be an increase in vegetative cover, particularly in grasses forbs and shrubs. This would improve the apparent naturalness of the Recreational segment. Requiring a backcountry use permit would reduce use within the Wild Segment. Not issuing new outfitter/guide permits would limit choices in outfitted opportunities to those that currently exist.

Under the No Grazing Option, there would be no noticeable difference in recreational uses or opportunities (see consequences described in the Livestock Grazing section).

### **3.2 Trails – Affected Environment**

There are approximately 15 miles of Forest Service system trails within the WSR corridor (see Figure 4). Most of them are short, leading from the corridor to destinations in the Wilderness, and are for foot or equestrian travel only. Trails in the Wild segment take visitors to popular destinations such as Beatty’s Cabin. The trails are kept in fairly good condition through periodic maintenance.

Throughout portions of the corridor, fishing enthusiasts, hikers, cattle, equestrians, hunters, and others have made additional user-created trails through repeated use over the course of many years. In the Recreational segment, user-created trails often parallel both sides of the river for fishing access and remain by repeated use. User-created trails are often not well located, and as such, are more prone to causing soil erosion, riparian damage, and sedimentation. The Forest Service occasionally relocates or rehabilitates user-created trails; however, there is no specific management emphasis on eliminating user-created trails.

The Wild segment has three rustic footbridges, designed to accommodate hikers and horseback riders, over water crossings. The bridges are located on Trail 397, Trail 260, and Trail 24. There are no trail bridges over the river in the Recreational segment, causing a loss of vegetation and bank stability where people continually cross.

### **Trails – Environmental Consequences**

#### No Action

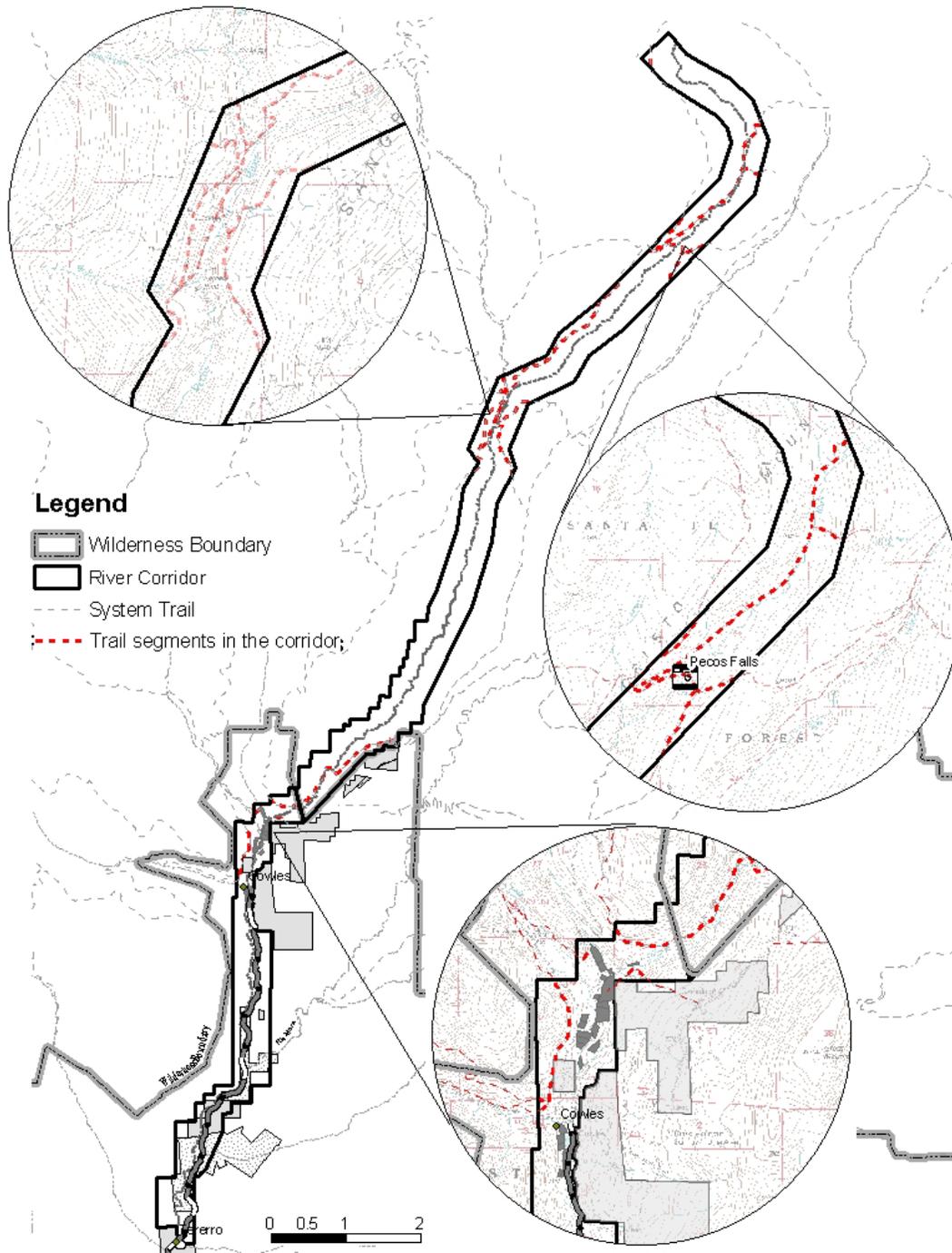
In the Recreational and Wild segments of the WSR, the number of user-created trails would increase over time, decreasing the amount of grasses, forbs and shrubs and detracting from the apparent naturalness of the WSR.

### All Action Alternatives

Under the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, closing or rehabilitating the user-created trails that are causing resource damage would increase grasses, forbs and shrubs, thereby enhancing the apparent naturalness of the corridor. Alternative 2 closes or rehabilitates *all* user-created trails, which would similarly increase grasses, forbs and shrubs. However, Alternative 2 would substantially limit the number of places that visitors could walk to, as they would be restricted to designated trails only. This would decrease the level of visitor satisfaction.

Under the No Grazing Option, there would be no noticeable difference in recreational uses or opportunities (see consequences described in the Livestock Grazing section).

Figure 4: Trails within the Wild and Scenic River Corridor



### **3.3 Developed Recreation Sites - Affected Environment**

The developed recreation sites and trailheads within the corridor are: Cowles Campground, Cowles Ponds, Winsor Ridge Trailhead, Mora Campground, and Willow Creek Shelter and Day Use Site (also known by NMG&F as the Bert Clancy Wildlife Area Community Shelters). There are other developed recreation sites in the upper Pecos canyon, outside the WSR: Jacks Creek Campground, Iron Gate Campground, Holy Ghost Campground, Panchuela Campground, Davis Willow Campground, and Terrero Campground. The trailheads are Winsor, Panchuela, Jacks Creek, Iron Gate and Holy Ghost (see Figure 5).

#### Cowles Campground (Forest Service)

Cowles Campground is located along Winsor Creek within the Cowles reach and adjacent to Cowles Ponds. Originally constructed as an overnight facility in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, it was reconstructed as a day use picnic area in 1987. It was later converted back to a campground in the early 1990s when Jacks Creek Campground was closed for reconstruction. Cowles Campground is a popular recreation site and is one of the few campgrounds on the Pecos District that offer walk-in campsites. Use and vehicles exceed designed capacity on some of the busier summer weekends. The campground still has a few of the three-sided Adirondack shelters constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 1994, the District completed the environmental analysis, implementation and the rehabilitation of the Upper Pecos recreation sites, including Cowles Campground.



Cowles Ponds & Winsor Ridge Trailhead (Forest Service)

Cowles Ponds is a day-use fishing area. The ponds are fed by Winsor Creek as it flows into the Pecos River at Cowles. Facilities at this area include a small pond with a fishing platform for children and people with disabilities, a large pond open to the general public, a vault toilet, a pedestrian bridge across the river, a parking area for up to 8 vehicles, and paths connecting the two ponds with the parking area. In 1996, the District completed rehabilitation of the Upper Pecos recreation sites, including Cowles Ponds and Winsor Ridge Trailhead.

The Winsor Ridge Trailhead is located across the road from Cowles Ponds. This trailhead primarily serves hikers and equestrians who want to access system trails, in addition to some recreationists who want to access the ponds. Individual parking spaces are not delineated, nor are there spaces designated for trailers. Because of this, cars, trailers, and horse trailers are sometimes parked in a haphazard manner, tending to limit the amount of parking especially during hunting season. A kiosk at the trailhead provides hikers with information on trails and destinations accessed from trail 271.

### Mora Campground (NMG&F)

Mora campground lies in the Willow/Mora reach of the river, on land owned and administered by the NMG&F. It is one of the most heavily used areas in the corridor and lies in the floodplain directly adjacent to the river. It does not contain designated campsites, so visitors park wherever they can find a relatively level spot.

Approximately 40 RVs, campers and other vehicles park shoulder-to-shoulder and totally fill this area on busy weekends. Issues such as privacy, personal space, and distance from other campers appear to be

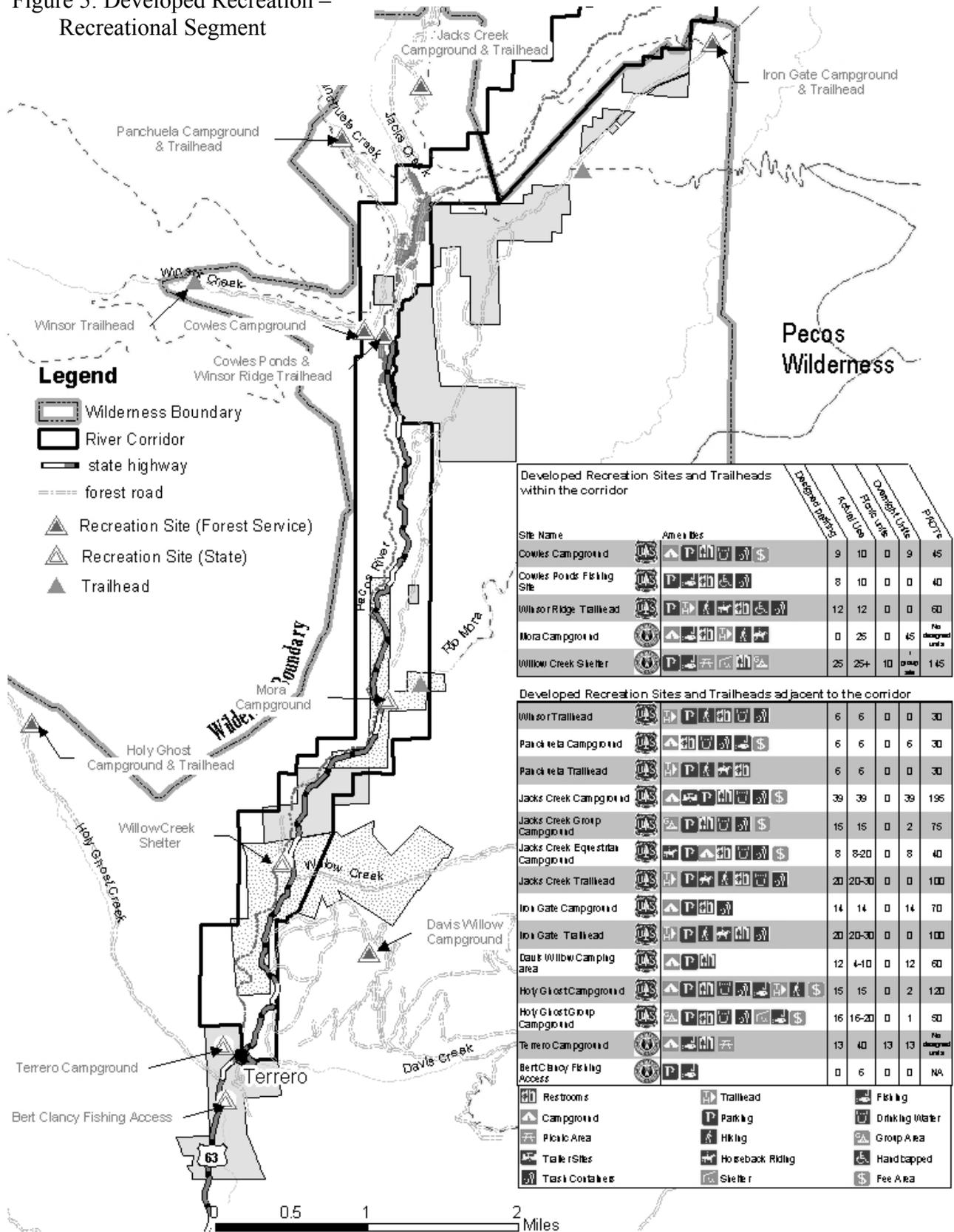


far less important than having a place near the water to camp. In Mora campground on a high use weekend, as many as 200 people occupy up to 46 individual sites. Re-designing the campground would likely provide less than ten campsites. The campground has two vault toilets, which are minimally maintained and not accessible to people with disabilities. No drinking water or garbage collection is provided and no fees are charged.

### Willow Creek Shelter and Day Use (NMG&F)

The Willow Creek day use area is also on land owned by NMG&F. This facility holds 96 people, has parking for about 25 cars, and has been very popular for group picnics and fishing. In the past, it had been used as a camping area. The area is currently closed because it is being used to stockpile fill during remediation of the old Terrero Mine. Once the remediation is complete, the day use area will be reopened. This site does not have handicap-accessible facilities.

Figure 5: Developed Recreation –  
Recreational Segment



### 3.4 Dispersed (Undeveloped) Recreation Uses - Affected Environment

#### Camping

The majority of camping within the corridor occurs in June, July, and August. In the Wild segment, there are very few places to camp due to steep cliffs, rugged terrain, and remoteness. As a result, the few flat, open areas like Beatty's Flats and Pecos Falls have been used heavily for decades, causing impacts to the riparian areas. A closure order prohibiting camping in those areas was put in place several years ago, and they are slowly recovering. Information posted at Wilderness trailheads list the closures, and wilderness rangers periodically monitor these areas. A few campsites adjacent to the river are still open and are not affecting river values.

In the Recreational segment, camping near Cowles is extremely limited due to rugged topography and the Cowles leases (including cabins). The lack of designated dispersed camping has led to poorly located, user-created campsites and parking areas that are degrading the environment. Camping in the Box Canyon reach is limited also because the highway is located well away from the river, making it difficult for people to reach campsites. Dispersed camping in this reach occurs along the road when the rest of the canyon's campsites are full.

The dispersed campsites near Mora Campground exceed capacity on weekends throughout the summer. In some areas, the congestion, over-crowding, uncontrolled vehicular use, and noise combine to detract from the recreational and scenic values for which the WSR was designated.



Dispersed camping near Terrero occurs in an upland

area between Highway 63 and the river on both State and Forest Service lands. It consists of two disturbed meadows (approximately five acres each in size) connected by a two-track, user-created road. The south site is partially situated in a wet meadow, created by water draining from the road and hillsides. A seasonal pond has enough water to support marsh grass and cattails. Campsites surround the wet meadow. Soil compaction, erosion, and loss of ground vegetation are caused by over-use and off-road vehicle use in this area. This area has no toilets, trash cans, or drinking water.

Overall, resource damage occurs in localized area, however, as the number of visitors increases, so do dispersed campsites. The most popular sites are increasingly crowded during peak use periods, and the acreage impacted by off-road driving, user-created trails, and uncontrolled parking continues to expand.

## Hunting and Fishing

Both local and out-of-state hunters use the Pecos Wilderness to hunt for elk, deer, and bighorn sheep. From September through late October, most of the desirable campsites in the Wilderness are occupied by hunting parties. Beginning in September, some hunters set up camp in the WSR corridor above Pecos Falls, but most of the hunting and camping takes place outside the corridor. Hunting parties typically park vehicles and horse trailers at Jacks Creek Campground or Iron Gate Campground.

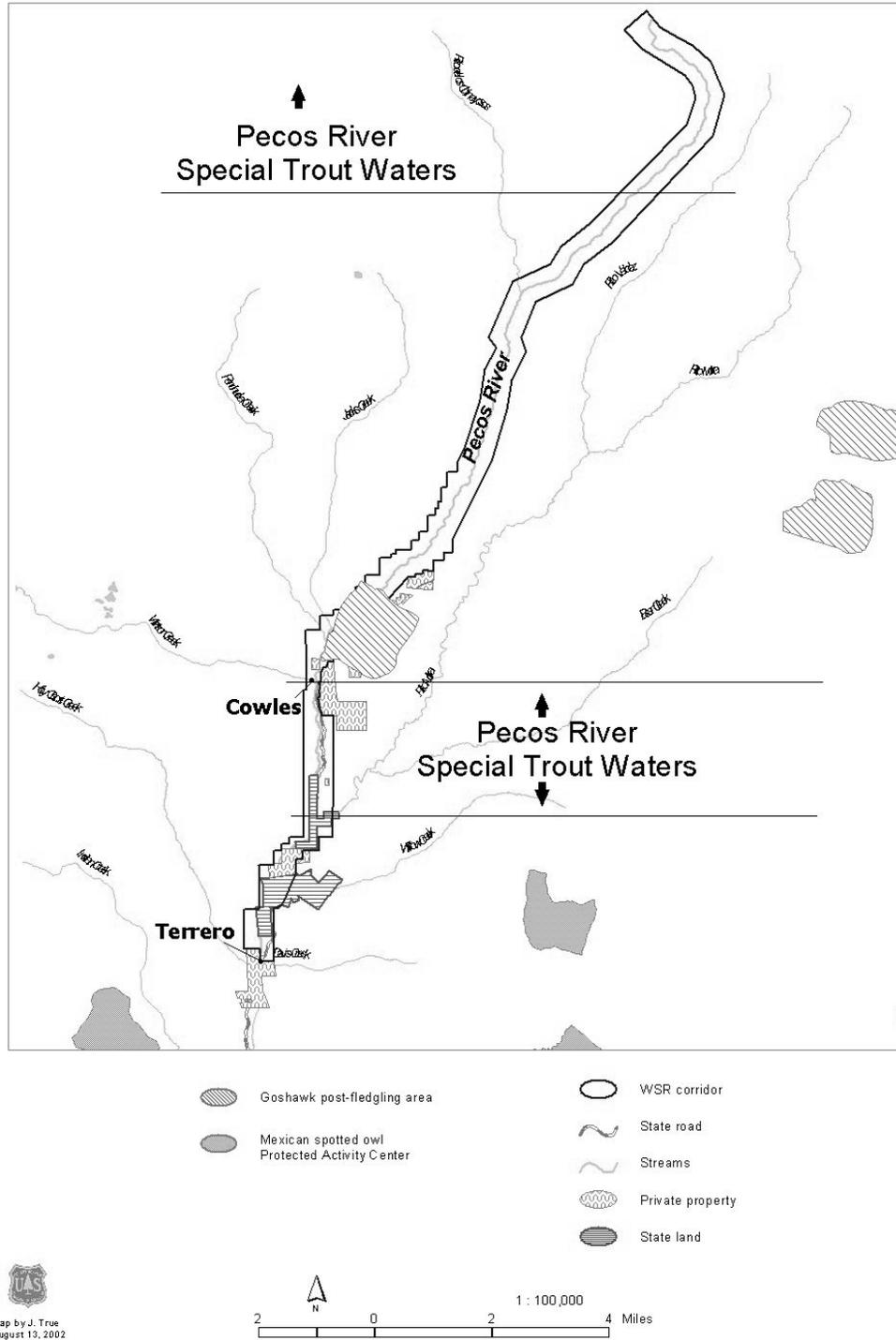
In the Recreational segment, there is almost no hunting because there is little habitat for big game animals. The Recreational segment also has many houses and structures, and NMG&F general regulations state “It is illegal to: shoot at, wound, take, attempt to take, or kill any protected species on, from or across any graded and maintained public road, or to shoot at game from within the fenced right of way of any paved road or highway or from within 40 feet of the pavement or maintained surface if no right of way fence exists.... Discharge a firearm within 150 yards of an inhabited dwelling or other building, except abandoned or vacated buildings, without permission of its owner or lessee . . .”

Trout fishing is a very popular activity in the corridor in the summer. In the Recreational segment just north of Terrero campground to the Willow Creek confluence, the amount of fishing is moderate to high. No public fishing occurs from approximately Willow Creek to the NMG&F lands south of the Mora River confluence because of private



property. One of the most concentrated fishing areas starts at the NMG&F lands south of the Mora River confluence and continues upstream to about ½ mile above the confluence. The amount of fishing from ½ mile above the Mora confluence to ¼ mile above the Cowles Bridge is moderate. This reach is designated by the State as “special trout waters, which limits anglers to two fish at least 12-inches long. From Cowles Ponds to just below the bridge on Trail 397, fishing is moderate to high on summer weekends. In the Wild segment there is very limited access to the river. The section from the trail bridge near the Wilderness boundary up to Beatty’s Flats is very inaccessible, and may be fished by only a handful of anglers per year. Beatty’s Flats and the area just above Pecos Falls may see a few anglers each summer.

Figure 6: Pecos Wild and Scenic River: Important Fish and Wildlife Areas



Based on the NMG&F Creel Census, between 1981 and 1985 fishing averaged 488 days/year from Cowles to the headwaters, and 22,845 days/year below Cowles to Pecos (one day = 12 hours). A fishing day in this region is valued at \$141. Thus, assuming no

change from 1985 fishing days, the monetary value of the fishery averages \$3,222,000 per year. The average annual harvest was 3,640 and 177,170 fish respectively in the two referenced sections. During those years, NMG&F stocked the river with approximately 61,150 rainbow trout per year; today the Recreational segment is stocked at somewhat lower levels.

### Off-Road Vehicle Use

Driving off of designated roads and trails has become much more prevalent in recent years within the corridor. All-terrain vehicles are commonly seen on both State and National Forest System lands. Soil compaction, loss of vegetative cover, and subsequent erosion have been attributed to off-road driving within the corridor. This use is currently allowed throughout the Recreational segment and prohibited in the Wild segment.

### Floating and Water-Play

Some reaches of the WSR would support a small raft, kayak, or canoe during certain times of the year when the river is running high. The river however, crosses a number of barriers that would make floating these scattered reaches difficult, if not impossible. There are no good launch sites for floating, and patchwork ownership in the Recreational segment prevents floating any distance. In addition, the WSR lacks wide, sandy shorelines suitable for swimming, wading, and water-play. Minor amounts of water play (wading and lounging) takes place in the Recreational segment near the Willow and Mora confluences.

## **Developed and Dispersed Recreation Uses - Environmental Consequences**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change from the existing conditions just described.

### Proposed Action

Closing dispersed campsites would displace users who have camped and recreated in them traditionally. User-created dispersed campsites would be created elsewhere outside of the corridor; however, providing designated dispersed campsites in the uplands would partially offset the loss of sites along the river. After dispersed campsites are closed and rehabilitated, there would be an increase in grasses, forbs and shrubs. This would improve the apparent naturalness of the Recreational segment.

Providing designated parking would minimize impacts to resources while emphasizing recreational opportunities. Eliminating parking along the river and highway shoulder may affect some people accustomed to parking in those areas. Eliminating vehicles from parking and driving along the river would enhance the natural setting since no vehicles would obstruct or interfere with views, and the grasses, forbs and shrub component of vegetation would be restored.

Prohibiting off-road driving would eliminate one of the recreational opportunities currently available in the Recreational segment. Visitors wishing to drive off-road would be displaced to locations outside the corridor.

Prohibited floating would have little effect since the WSR does not have desirable floating waters, and very few people attempt to navigate this narrow river.

### Alternative 1

By closing user-created campsites in riparian areas, visitors accustomed to camping at these sites would be affected. New user-created dispersed campsites would be created outside the river corridor.

By allowing off road driving within the Recreational segment of the corridor, vegetation would continue to decrease which would have an effect on the apparent naturalness of the area.

### Alternative 2

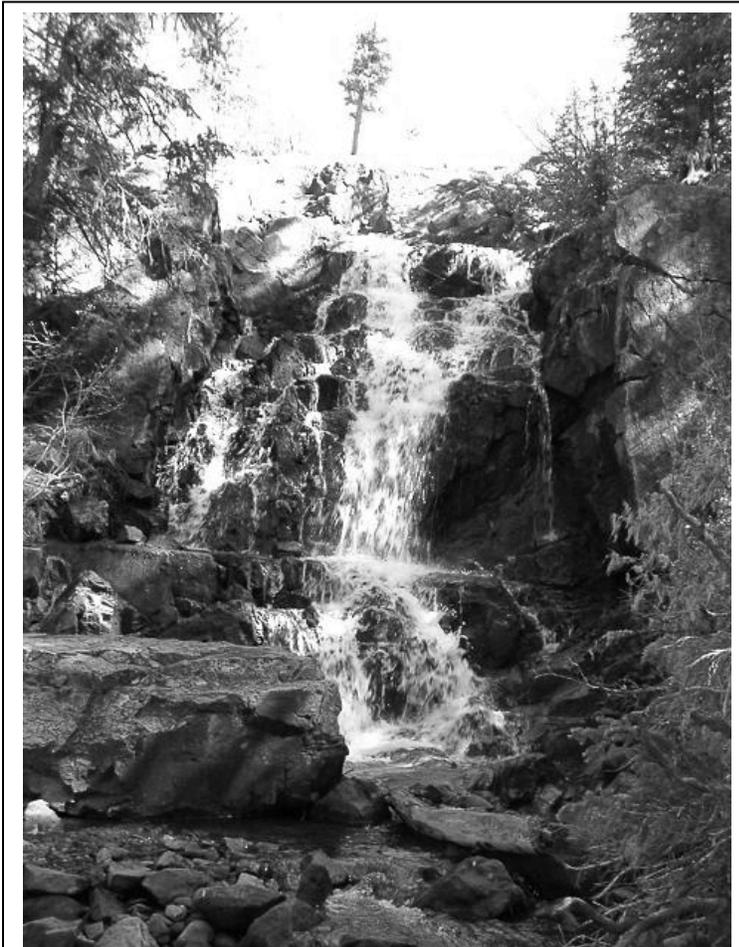
Eliminating all dispersed camping in the Recreational segment would have an affect on visitors accustomed to camping for free wherever they choose to. Visitors would then create dispersed campsites outside of the corridor.

Closing dispersed camping would shift the emphasis from overnight to day use, an emphasis that may have an effect on some visitors.

Eliminating off-road vehicle use and floating would have the same effect as the Proposed Action.

### **3.5 Scenic Resources – Affected Environment**

The scenic beauty and aesthetic qualities of the Pecos River have attracted people to the area since the 1880s when the railroads brought people to travel to dude ranches in the canyon, and cabins and sites were established



Accessed only by an 8-mile hike or horseback ride, Pecos Falls is a destination for some.

for summer resorts. An almost panoramic view of peaks in the distance surrounding the valley provide the ideal setting that people expect when they visit a National Forest in the western United States.

Both the Wild and Recreational segments lie entirely within what is called the West Range Character Type, characterized by mountains with highly dissected slopes, sharp, angular ridge tops, and V-shaped canyons (USDA-FS 1989). The Pecos River is a sub-unit of this landscape character type. Under the new Scenery Management System (SMS) the majority of the corridor is classified as Distinctive in terms of scenic attractiveness (USDA-FS 1995b). Scenery along the Pecos is characterized by a variety of landforms, vegetation, colors, and textures. Distinctive scenic features include steep, rocky canyon slopes, narrow river gorges, occasional meadows, and riverbanks forested with cottonwood, pine, spruce-fir, and aspen.



**Visual quality in the Recreational segment has been affected by the Terrero Mine and its remediation**

In the Wild segment, the Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is classified as Very High; as such, it should appear essentially unaltered (refer to USDA-FS 1995a for detailed descriptions of this SIO and its management implications). Indeed, the landscape is essentially unmodified and intact in this segment, so the SIO is being met generally. There are a few insignificant deviations, such as where trails cross the river near Betty's Flats and Pecos Falls. The scenic quality of the latter sites is showing signs of improvement that should continue.

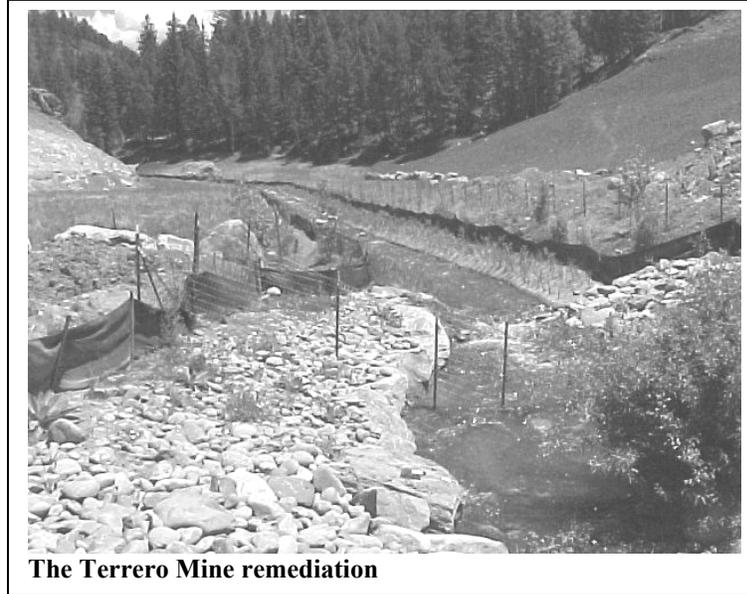
The Recreational segment is classified as having a High SIO, which allows forest management activities that are not evident in the long-term (refer to USDA-FS, 1995 for details and management implications). Portions of this segment are not consistent with a High SIO, particularly on non-federal lands.

The landscape character within the lower reaches of the Recreational segment ranges from heavily altered to less modified. For example, the State land about 2 miles north of Terrero has been heavily mined for a variety of minerals and metals. A portion of the mine is within the WSR corridor, and it has had a negative impact on the scenery. Remediation efforts are underway to address and reverse these impacts. In addition, upland, dispersed campsites on Forest Service land between Terrero and Cowles have been damaged and heavily altered as a result of uncontrolled vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Denuded of vegetation, these "browened out" areas detract from the scenic

integrity within the immediate foreground; the SIO of High is not being met. The surrounding background and middle ground areas are intact and do meet the SIO.

In the upper reaches of this segment, the Cowles Campground, Winsor Ridge Trailhead and Cowles Ponds generally meet the High SIO. However, the deteriorated condition of the facilities at the ponds and uncontrolled parking at the trailhead detract from the scenic quality within the immediate foreground of the river and road.

North and south of this area are the Cowles leased properties. In general the Cowles lease lots, cabins and associated structures also deviate from the expected natural, unmodified character of the landscape. The architectural style of these properties ranges from simple and rustic to urban. Some lawns are manicured while others are allowed to grow naturally. The scenic integrity of the Cowles lease lots is not considered consistent with a High SIO classification.



### **Scenic Resources – Environmental Consequences**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change in the existing conditions.

#### Proposed Action and Alternative 2

The Proposed Action would improve slightly the scenic quality as a result of the new management direction specifically aimed at protecting and enhancing scenic resources. New informational signs, designated parking, and designated camping sites would not affect scenic values because they would be designed to ensure a rustic appearance consistent with SMS guidelines for areas with High to Very High SIOs. Managing for High to Very High SIOs would keep the level of development fairly low, such as by using natural and natural-appearing materials, wherever possible.

Scenic integrity would be improved by reducing uncontrolled camping and parking, eliminating and rehabilitating many of the user-created roads and trails, rehabilitating old campsites in the riparian zone, eliminating off-road driving, and other restrictions. The new restrictions would promote vegetation in denuded areas while reducing overcrowding, which would improve scenic values overall.

## Alternative 1

Alternative 1, which does not impose as many restrictions on land uses in the corridor, would not change scenic values from the current conditions. Most of the same uses that detract from scenic integrity, like dispersed camping, would still occur.

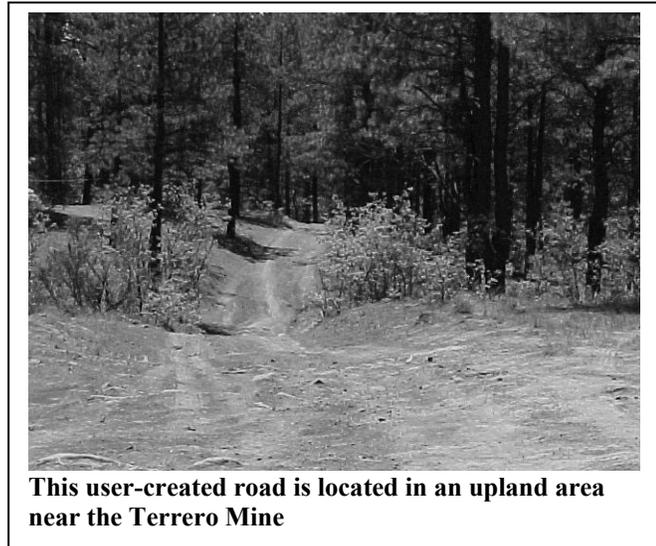
Under the No Grazing Option, there would be no noticeable effects on scenic values because scenery is evaluated at a landscape level, and the effects of grazing would be too small to be noticed at that scale.

### **3.6 Roads – Affected Environment**

Twelve miles of designated roads exist within the WSR corridor. The main access road, State Highway 63, parallels the Recreational segment of the river for most of its length providing access to the river. The NMSH&TD maintains the highway to Cowles, and the Forest Service maintains Forest Service roads from Cowles to the north. The section of road from Terrero to Cowles was chip-sealed as a part of the Terrero Mine remediation in 1991. This work, meant to be temporary, is still in place today. The road is very narrow with limited sight distance. Maintenance of roads leading directly to private land is the responsibility of the landowners.

Several roads branch off of State Highway 63. (FR) 646 leads to Elk Mountain, (FR) 223 leads to the Iron Gate Campground, (FR) 121 goes east along Winsor Creek to the summer home area, (FR) 305 goes to Panchuela and finally, (FR) 555, a paved road, goes from Cowles to Jacks Creek.

There are also several user-created, two-track roads in the Recreational segment, created by repeated vehicle use off the designated road system. The Forest Service attempts to decommission (and return to a natural condition) user-created roads where they are damaging forest resources. The Forest is currently conducting a Roads Analysis Process to identify roads that should be decommissioned, closed, or relocated and should complete the analysis process for the Pecos/Las Vegas District within the next two years.



A number of user-created roads access the river via State lands administered by NMG&F. These roads tend to run through or around dispersed camping areas, reduce vegetation and soil productivity, and detract from the river values.

Two Forest Service bridges cross the river within the corridor, one at Cowles and the other about a mile north of Cowles at the confluence with Jacks Creek. The Forest Service built these bridges to provide recreational access to Winsor Creek and Jacks Creek. These bridges are single span. A similar bridge owned by the State of New Mexico crosses at the confluence of Willow Creek. In addition, four privately owned “driveway” bridges cross the river within the corridor, providing access to the Cowles leases and private lands. These bridges are one lane and are the responsibility of the private owner or leaseholder.

### **Roads –Environmental Consequences**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change from the existing condition just described.

#### All Action Alternatives

Not constructing any new system roads would limit recreational use to its current location(s). No users would be displaced, but new recreational sites would not be created. Further, the river would not be segmented by road crossings.

### **3.7 Cultural/Historic (Heritage Resources) – Affected Environment**

Little of the corridor has been inventoried for cultural resources. Inventoried areas within and in the vicinity of the corridor provide evidence of prehistoric use during the Paleo-Indian (9500-5500 BC), Archaic (5500 BC-AD 200), Basketmaker (AD1-500) and Puebloan periods (AD 500-1600). Most of these sites consist of lithic and/or shard scatters and appear to represent seasonal, temporary campsites used for hunting, fishing, gathering plants, and quarrying of raw lithic materials. A few traditional cultural properties that are still used by descendants of Pecos Pueblo Indians from Jemez Pueblo are located near and/or may be within the river area.

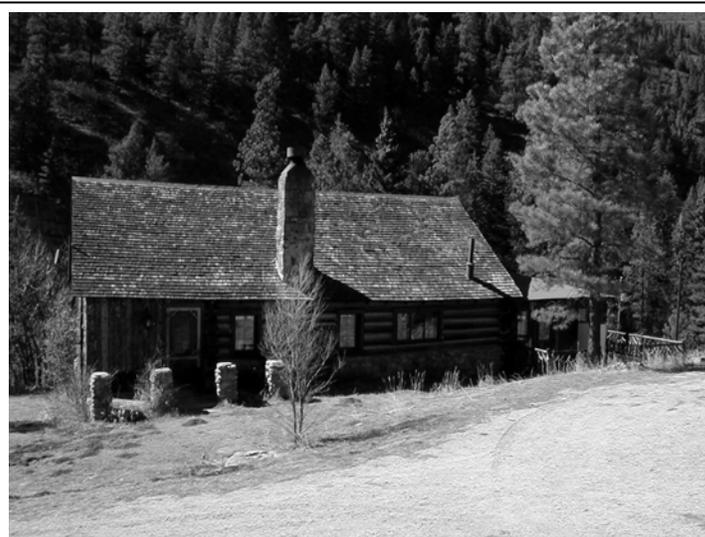
As early as 1600, Spanish explorers began scouting the upper Pecos river valley for mineral wealth. With the coming of permanent European and Hispanic settlers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, grazing, logging, hunting, trapping, and mining increased. Most historic sites recorded in the area lie outside the Wilderness boundary and consist of old mines, acequias, cemeteries, sawmills, summer cabins, a ranger station, campground structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and trash scatters dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

One of the better-known historic sites in the corridor is Beatty’s Cabin. This site lies within the Wild segment and contributes to the cultural/historic value attributed to this WSR. George Beatty, a well-known Pecos high country prospector of the late 1800's, built a cabin at the confluence of the Rito del Padre and the Pecos River in the early 1870's. The original cabin fell into disrepair and was no longer visible by 1910.

In 1912 the Forest Service built the second Beatty’s cabin nearby, and in 1946 built a third cabin, in cooperation with NMG&F. Elliot Barker (1985) wrote a book titled *Beatty’s Cabin*, which documents adventures associated with the cabins in the Pecos high

country from the late 1800s through the mid 1900s. In 1946 a third Beatty's cabin was constructed adjacent to the second. In 1963 both of these cabins were moved to their present location about ½ mile southwest of their original location. The 1912 cabin was converted into a tack shed. A fourth cabin was constructed at the current location in 1963 and 1964 (see Hurst 1988). All of these structures, along with a pasture and corral, are still used today at what is called the Beatty's Administrative Site. This is an area where hikers and horseback riders will stop, take pictures, and then continue or turn around.

Other well-known historic sites within the corridor include Terrero and the Terrero Mine, aerial tramway and cemetery, and the Connel Cabin. All of these sites lie wholly or partially within the Recreational segment of the corridor. The mineral wealth at the Terrero Mine was first discovered around 1882, but the mine did not become profitable until 1927. It operated for 12 years as New Mexico's leading producer of zinc, lead, gold and silver. It



**The Connel Cabin is located within the recreation segment of the corridor**

employed over 600 miners and at one time Terrero boasted a population of 2,500 (deBuys 1985). The mine was determined ineligible to the National Register previous to remediation. The northernmost portion of the tramway crosses through the southernmost portion of the river corridor. The tramway transported ore from the mine north of Terrero to the mill in Alamitos Canyon, located some 12 miles to the south. While in operation, it was the longest aerial tramway in North America.

Just north of Terrero, the Connell Cabin served as a Forest Service Station from 1914 to 1917. In 1925 it was purchased by American Metals Company and served as living quarters for visiting executives during the mine's heyday. In 1943 the cabin went into private ownership. It is presently listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, and is under an "isolated cabin" special use permit with the Forest Service. The Terrero cemetery lies on the eastern boundary of the corridor a half-mile northeast of Terrero adjacent to NM 63. It apparently served as the cemetery for Terrero and surrounding areas mostly during the operation of the mine. Although no surface features are visible today, gravestones were reported at the site as late as the 1970s and apparently have been removed by vandals.

Several CCC-era campgrounds lie within or adjacent to the Recreational segment of the corridor and were constructed during the 1930's Great Depression era. These include the Holy Ghost, Panchuela and Cowles campgrounds on Forest Service lands.

The Panchuela Ranger Station/Administrative Site lies a short distance to the north of the corridor along Panchuela Creek. The station was built in 1912 and served as such until 1945, and since then as an administrative site. The site was the focal point for many of Ranger John W. Johnson's administrative duties from 1914-1944 as a new ranger on the newly established Santa Fe National Forest/Pecos Ranger District. He wrote a book titled *Reminiscences of a Forest Ranger* (see Johnson 1976), recounting many of his experiences there.

Several summer home/lease areas also lie within and/or immediately adjacent to the Recreational segment. These include Holy Ghost, Winsor, Cowles, and Grass Mountain. All of these areas have homes dating from as early as the early 1900s through the 1960s. The Cowles Leases were once part of Mountain View Ranch, which operated as a dude and cattle ranch from 1915 to 1945 at the confluence of Winsor Creek and Pecos River. A book entitled *Mountain View Ranch: 1915-1945* (see Hmura 1996) has been written documenting the events that occurred here over the years. The ranch was a well-known destination, was the largest of such resorts in the area and served as a vacation ground, primarily for Easterners for whom it was fashionable to spend the summer at a western dude ranch. Many of the structures associated with the ranch were removed or destroyed in the 1970s and only several cabins remain on some of the lease lots.

Other historic sites within or adjacent to WSR corridor include homesteads, an acequia, campsites and/or trash scatters.

Current Forest Plan direction, laws and regulations emphasize protection of these valuable resources. Properly designed and implemented land management activities, such as thinning, prescribed burning, and other Forest Service activities avoid adverse impacts to cultural resources. However, as most visitors are unaware of the cultural resource sites in the corridor and their significance, they tend to inadvertently damage them by driving, hiking, or horseback riding over them. Some visitors remove artifacts or intentionally damage cultural remains. Where driving, parking, camping and other recreational uses occur outside designated areas, there is a risk of damage to cultural resources. Livestock grazing only occurs in a small portion of the corridor, and where it occurs poses a low risk of damage to cultural resources from trampling or rubbing.

### **Cultural/Historic (Heritage Resources) –Environmental Consequences**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change from the existing conditions just described.

#### Proposed Action and Alternative 2

Controlling recreational uses would lessen the risk of damage to cultural resources. For example, by providing information about heritage resources, public appreciation and respect for them would increase. Visitors would be more careful to not damage or remove cultural remains.

Barriers, closure of dispersed sites, no new campgrounds, and revegetation of denuded areas would facilitate the protection of cultural sites where uncontrolled dispersed