

APPENDIX D  
**Recreation Opportunity Spectrum  
Class Descriptions**



## RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) consists of a classification system in which components of recreation settings and facilities—such as access, developed sites, activities, and experiences—are organized and arranged along a continuum or spectrum. The continuum ranges from very primitive settings and experiences to highly concentrated, urbanized ones. Each class is defined in terms of its specific combination of activities, setting, facilities, and experience opportunities.

The ROS provides a framework for defining the types of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences that the public might desire, as well as the mix of the spectrum that a given National Forest might be able to provide. It also provides a context and tool for estimating and describing recreation resources as well as effects to those resources from alternative management strategies and actions. Provided below are summaries of the ROS descriptions:

- **Primitive (P):** These areas provide primitive recreation opportunities in unroaded and non-motorized settings. Unmodified natural and natural-appearing settings dominate the physical environment. These areas are usually larger than 5,000 acres, and offer opportunities for solitude, remoteness, and risk, with no on-site controls or restrictions evident after entry. Encounters with other users, and signs of other users, are minimal. Generally, snowmobile, ATV, and other OHV uses are inconsistent with this ROS class.
- **Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM):** These areas provide for non-motorized recreation opportunities in unroaded and non-motorized settings. A natural-appearing setting dominates the physical environment, with only subtle or minor evidence of human-caused modifications. These areas are generally larger than 2,500 acres, and offer opportunities for solitude, remoteness, and risk, with a minimum of on-site controls and restrictions. Other user encounters are generally low, with low levels of the sights and sounds of other users. Management to control undesirable effects of insects, disease, and other pests, as well as management actions designed to maintain or improve the long-term health of the ecosystem, could occur. Generally, snowmobile, ATV, and other OHV uses are inconsistent with this ROS class. Summer/winter shifts between this class and Semi-Primitive Motorized can occur; for example, areas where cross-country motorized travel is prohibited during the summer may be open to snowmobile use during winter periods.
- **Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM):** These areas provide for motorized recreation opportunities in semi-primitive settings. In areas seen from travelways, a natural-appearing setting dominates the outdoor physical environment. Other areas could have moderately dominant alterations. These areas are generally larger than 2,500 acres and offer opportunities for solitude, remoteness, and risk, with few on-site controls and restrictions. Other user encounters should be generally low; however, the sounds of other users may be evident because of motorized uses. Motorized and non-motorized trails are the primary means of recreational user access within the area.

Cross-country snowmobile use may occur on adequate snow depth in accordance with the current travel management plan or map and travel amendments. Non-motorized recreation opportunities may be present, but these experiences are likely to be influenced by motorized uses in the area. There may be areas or trails in this ROS class where motorized use is prohibited or restricted to enhance recreation experiences or to protect public safety or resources. Summer/winter shifts between this class and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized can occur; for example, areas where cross-country motorized travel is prohibited during the summer may be open to snowmobile use during winter periods.

- **Roaded Natural (RN):** These areas provide for a wide range of recreation activities that are generally focused along the primary and secondary travel routes in a natural-appearing, roaded, motorized setting. Recreation facilities are provided to facilitate recreation use. There may be a moderate to high degree of user interaction, as well as the sights and sounds of other users, depending on the facilities provided. Seasonal or year-round recreation facilities are provided for user comfort and convenience. Structures generally convey a rustic theme and blend with the natural landscape. There may be considerable on-site user controls or restrictions. Opportunities for isolation, challenge, or risk are generally not very important, although opportunities for practicing outdoor skills may be important. Scenic values are often emphasized in this classification. A wide range of management activities and objectives may occur, generally guided by the adopted Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). Landscape modifications due to resource management activities, where evident, harmonize with the natural setting. Developed campgrounds of varying size, complexity, and development scale could occur within this classification. In addition, there may be a wide range of facilities and structures to support other Forest uses, including telecommunication facilities, power lines, administrative sites, State Highways, and timber access roads. Cross-country snowmobile use may occur on adequate snow depth in accordance with the current travel management plan or map and travel amendments. There may be areas, trails, or roads within this ROS class where motorized use is prohibited or restricted to enhance recreation experiences or to protect public safety or resources.
- **Rural (R):** These areas are typically characterized by recreation sites that can be utilized by large numbers of people at one time. High quality and quantity recreation use characterize these areas. Although natural conditions usually do not dominate this classification, scenic values are often a critical element of the landscape seen as middleground and background from such areas. Surrounding scenic values are often a valued resource in the adjacent Forest landscape. The recreation opportunities offered are usually managed, regulated, and numerous but also in harmony with nature. Numerous recreation facilities may be clustered in these areas. Facilities are designed for user comfort and are surrounded by highly intensified motorized use and organized parking. Forms of mass transit are often available to carry people throughout the site. The on-site vegetation is often manicured or managed. Transportation routes are generally State and Forest Service paved roadways. Trails may also be paved or surfaced in areas of concentrated use. There may be areas, trails, or roads within this ROS class where motorized use is prohibited or restricted to enhance recreation experiences or to protect public safety or resources (Forest Service, 2003).

- **Urban (U):** These areas are managed to provide a setting that is largely modified. Large numbers of users can be expected, and vegetation cover is often exotic and manicured. Facilities for highly intensified motor vehicle use and parking are available, with mass transit often included to carry people throughout the site. The probability of encountering other individuals and groups is prevalent, as is the convenience of recreational opportunities. Experiencing natural environments and their challenges and risks is relatively unimportant. Opportunities for competitive and spectator sports are common (BLM, no date).