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Comments: The attached documents is an objection with attachments to the Santa Fe Draft ROD, Plan, and FEIS.

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objections-southwestern-regional-office@usda.gov Subject: Santa Fe National Forest Plan Revision Objection

This submittal is an objection to the Draft ROD, FEIS, and Revised LMP for the Santa Fe National Forest. Name of the project being objected to, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name of the National Forest on which the project is located:

Santa Fe Forest Plan, FEIS, and Draft ROD Debbie Cress, Forest Supervisor

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#### Section I. Brief Review of Issues and Proposed SolutionsA. Introduction

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) Leadership Council 2004 vision for the future of the CDNST states, [ldquo]Complete the Trail to connect people and communities to the Continental Divide by providing scenic, high-quality, primitive hiking and horseback riding experiences, while preserving the significant natural, historic, and cultural resources along the Trail.[rdquo] The Leadership Council in 2006 reviewed concerns related to the 1985 CDNST Comprehensive Plan and decided to amend the Comprehensive Plan direction following official public involvement processes.<sup>1</sup> The final amended CDNST Comprehensive Plan programmatic direction was published in a Federal Register Notice and took effect on November 4, 2009.<sup>2</sup> The CDNST Comprehensive Plan should eventually be revised to further address the conservation,<sup>4</sup> and preservation<sup>5</sup> purposes of this National Scenic Trail.

The amended Comprehensive Plan was approved by Chief Thomas Tidwell<sup>6</sup> (Attachment A). An outcome of the amended Comprehensive Plan was the description of the nature and purposes of this National Scenic Trail: [ldquo]Administer the CDNST consistent with the nature and purposes for which this National Scenic Trail was established. The CDNST was established by an Act of Congress on November 10, 1978 (16 USC 1244(a)). The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor.[rdquo]

The amended Comprehensive Plan establishes other important direction for the management of the CDNST including:

[middot] The right-of-way for the CDNST is to be of sufficient width to protect natural, scenic, cultural, and historic features along the CDNST travel route and to provide needed public use facilities.

[middot] Land and resource management plans are to provide for the protection, development, and management of the CDNST as an integrated part of the overall land and resource management direction for the land area through which the trail passes.

[middot] The CDNST is a concern level 1 travel route with a scenic integrity objective of high or very high.

[middot] Manage the CDNST to provide high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and pack and stock opportunities. Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) in delineating and integrating recreation opportunities in managing the CDNST.<sup>7</sup> The use of motorized vehicles by the general public along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited with limited exceptions.<sup>8</sup>

The CDNST Federal Register Notice provided additional direction to the Forest Service as described in FSM 2353 (Attachment B). The final directives added a reference to the CDNST Comprehensive Plan as an authority in FSM 2353.01d; [hellip] added the nature and purposes of the CDNST in FSM 2353.42; and added detailed direction in FSM 2353.44b for governing implementation of the CDNST on National Forest System lands.

The Land Management Planning Handbook establishes important guidance that address relationships between National Scenic and Historic Trail Comprehensive Plans and Forest Plans. Appropriate management of National Scenic Trails (36 CFR [sect] 219.10(b)(1)(vi)) is addressed in FSH 1909.12 24.43 stating:

[middot] The Interdisciplinary Team shall identify statutorily designated national scenic and historic trails and plan components must provide for the management of rights-of-ways(16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(a)(2)) consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

[middot] Plan components must provide for the nature and purposes of existing national scenic and historic trails.

The final amendments to the CDNST Comprehensive Plan and corresponding directives [hellip] will be applied through land management planning and project decisions following requisite environmental analysis (74 FR 51124). CDNST management direction enacted through correspondence may supplement this direction, but such direction would not supersede the guidance found in the National Trails System Act (NTSA), Executive Orders, CDNST Comprehensive Plan, regulations, and directives.

Comments submitted on the Draft Plan and DEIS (Attachment C) that included a CDNST Planning Handbook (Attachment D) and recommendations in this objection are consistent with the direction proposed in H.R. 5118. Specifically, Draft Plan, DEIS, and these objection recommendations support the direction in H.R. 5118 Section 2, which states, [ldquo](1) Complete the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail by acquiring land as necessary to eliminate gaps between sections of the Trail and secure corridors compatible with the nature and purposes of the Trail. (2) Optimize the Trail by relocating existing portions of the Trail on Federal land as necessary to maximize conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the Trail corridor.[rdquo]

Much of the revised Santa Fe National Forest plan direction departs from the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, FSH 2353.4, and FSH 1909.12 23.23a, and 24.43 guidance without providing a reasoned basis or a detailed

justification for ignoring these previous findings and direction.

#### B. Summary of Issues and Statements of Explanation<sup>1</sup>. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation environments, activities, and experience opportunities. The Forest Service uses the recreation opportunity spectrum to define recreation settings. The 1982 ROS User Guide, 1986 ROS Book (Attachment E), and FSM 2310 (WO Amendment 2300-90-1) were the recreation resource technical basis for the planning rule and planning directives. To be consistent with the planning rule and recreation policy and research the Forest Plan must define and apply ROS principles that are consistent with the ROS planning framework which is the best available scientific recreation planning information. Most important is including ROS physical setting indicators when describing Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, and Semi- Primitive Motorized ROS setting desired conditions.

The ROS Book states, [ldquo]The physical setting is defined by the absence or presence of human

sights and sounds, size, and the amount of environmental modification caused by human activity. The physical setting is documented by combining these three criteria as described below. Physical Setting - The physical setting is best defined by an area's degree of remoteness from the sights and sounds of humans, by its size, and by the amount of environmental change caused by human activity[hellip] The explicit nature of the ROS assists managers in identifying and mitigating conflict. Because the ROS identifies appropriate uses within different recreation opportunities, it is possible to separate potentially incompatible uses. It also helps separate those uses that yield experiences that might conflict, such as solitude and socialization[hellip] The ROS also helps identify potential conflicts between recreation and non-recreation resource uses. It does this in several ways. First, it can specify the overall compatibility between a given recreation opportunity and other resource management activities. Second, it can suggest how the activities, setting quality, or likely experiences might be impacted by other non-recreation activities. Third, it can indicate how future land use changes might impact the present pattern of a recreation opportunity provision. The apparent naturalness of an area is highly influenced by the evidence of human developments. If the landscape is obviously altered by roads, railroads, reservoirs, power lines, pipe lines, or even by highly visual vegetative manipulations, such as clearcuttings, the area will not be perceived as being predominately natural. Even if the total acres of modified land are relatively small, "out of scale" modifications can have a negative impact.[rdquo]

The Forest Service, in FSM 2310 (WO Amendment 2300-2020-1) on April 23, 2020, modified the 1982 ROS User Guide and 1986 ROS Book Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting definitions and no longer refers to the 1982 ROS User Guide direction for planning purposes. The agency does not explain the change to policy, but it appears that the agency wishes to allow for mechanical treatments and timber production in Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS settings and to allow for road construction in Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings for the vague purpose of forest health. Concerning is that the agency does not disclose the consequences of those changes to recreationists seeking Primitive and Semi-Primitive ROS experiences when new roads and vegetation management activities are encountered, including those seeking high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Primitive and Semi-Primitive ROS classes must constrain some management actions such as mechanical treatments of vegetation that utilize heavy equipment and permanent or temporary roads if these desired ROS class opportunities as described in the 1986 ROS Book and used in the Planning Rule PEIS are to be protected.

The recreation opportunity spectrum provides a framework for integrating recreational opportunities and nonrecreational activities. The central notion of the spectrum is to offer recreationists alternative settings in which they can derive a variety of experiences. Because the

management factors that give recreational value to a site are interdependent, management must strive to maintain consistency among these factors so that unplanned or undesired changes in the opportunities do not

occur.

## 2. CDNST Plan Components

The National Trails System Act of 1968, 82 Stat. 919, as amended, provides that the CDNST shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture and so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities. It empowers and requires that the Secretary of Agriculture select the CDNST rights-of-way which informs the National Scenic Trail corridor location and width. The CDNST travel route is to be located within the established corridor. The establishment of the CDNST corridor thus constitutes an overlay on the management regime otherwise applicable to public areas managed by land management agencies. The NTSA and Trails for America in the 21st Century Executive Order limits the management discretion the agencies would otherwise have by mandating the delineation and protection of the CDNST rights-of-way (aka National Trail Management Corridor) for the purpose of providing for the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

The revised Forest Plan CDNST plan components do not reflect the guidance in the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Trails System Act as amended in 1978. The Forest Service relies on an ambiguous right-of-way<sup>9</sup> statement in the National Trails System Act as enacted in 1968 as an indicator that the management and protection of National Scenic and Historic Trails is subordinate to common multiple-use programs. This improper interpretation of the rights-of-way selection guidance in the NTSA often goes as follows: [ldquo]The National Trails System Act at 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(a)(2) indicates that management in the vicinity of the CDNST while it traverses management areas that are subject to development or management is acceptable, but should be designed to harmonize with the CDNST as possible. Development and management of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for that specific area in order to insure continued maximum benefits from the land. The wording recognizes multiple uses and seeks to moderate impacts on the trail from resource management to the extent feasible while meeting resource management objectives.[rdquo]<sup>10</sup>

The 1968 guidance [ldquo]to be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for that specific area[rdquo] was to some extent addressed in 1980 directives by Chief Max Peterson: [ldquo]Development and administration of a National Scenic Trail or National Historic Trail will ensure retention of the outdoor recreation experience for which the trail was established[hellip] Land management planning should describe the planned actions that may affect that trail and its associated environments. Through this process, resource management activities prescribed for land adjacent to the trail can be made compatible with the purpose for which the trail is established. The objective is to maintain or enhance such values as esthetics, natural features, historic and archeological resources, and other cultural qualities of the areas through which a National Scenic or National Historic Trail goes.[rdquo]

The National Forest Management Act requires that a Land Management Plan address the comprehensive planning and other requirements of the NTSA in order to form one integrated Plan. As such, the NTSA guidance that a National Trails System segment be, [ldquo]designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for that specific area,[rdquo] is not applicable to a land management plan approved after the passage of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) in 1976 and as addressed in the 1982 planning regulations.

Furthermore, the NTSA was amended in 1978 in part to designate the CDNST and require comprehensive planning for National Scenic and Historic Trails, which the Forest Service until recently was attempting to complete through staged decisions for the CDNST whereas the revised Santa Fe Forest Plan is critical in contributing to NTSA comprehensive planning requirements.

The National Forest Management Act requires the formulation of one integrated plan (16 U.S.C.

[sect] 1604(f)(1)). The 2012 NFMA regulations 36 CFR [sect] 219.1 requires integrated resource management of

the resources within the plan area and that plans must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. These regulations also require integrated resource management of multiple use (36 CFR [sect] 219.10(a)), including providing for plan components to provide for the, [ldquo](vi) Appropriate management of other designated areas or recommended designated areas in the plan area, including research natural areas.[rdquo] Planning directives describe that planning for designated areas may be met through the land management plan, unless the authorities for the designation require a separate plan; however, in the case of the CDNST the Comprehensive Plan directs that Forest Plans further implement the CDNST comprehensive planning requirements through staged-decision making. [ldquo][hellip] Any parts of a designated area plan that meet the requirements for land management plan components must be included in the land management plan. The entire area plan does not need to be included in the land management plan. The land management plans must also be compatible with these designated area plans or either the land management plan or the designated area plan must be amended to achieve this compatibility.[rdquo] (FSH 1909.12 [ndash] 24.3)

The revised Forest Plan CDNST plan components do not protect the qualities and values of this National Scenic Trail. The plan components do not address the National Trails System Act and CDNST Comprehensive Plan requirements to: (1) provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities that reflect ROS planning framework conventions,

and (2) conserve scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(a)(2)). In addition, the plan does not establish direction to: (1) preserve significant natural, historical, and cultural resources (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1244(f)(1)); and (2) protect the CDNST corridor to the degree necessary to ensure that the values for which the CDNST was established remain intact or are restored (E.O. 13195, FSM 2353.44b(1) and FSH 1909.12 24.43). The revised plan draft decision does not avoid approving activities that are incompatible with the purposes for which the CDNST was established (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(c)).

#### C. Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision

The CDNST Comprehensive Plan in Chapter IV Part A states, [ldquo]The primary policy is to administer the CDNST consistent with the nature and purposes for which this National Scenic Trail was established. The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor.[rdquo]

For the purpose of providing for the nature and purposes of the CDNST, resolving this objection, and addressing key proposed Forest Plan deficiencies, the Forest Service should take the following actions:

[middot] Reference and follow the direction in the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan.

[middot] ROS class definitions need to be expanded to add descriptions of Non-Recreation Uses and Evidence of Humans. ROS setting descriptions need to be consistent with the 1986 ROS Book which was a basis for the recreation direction in the planning rule as informed by the Planning Rule PEIS and FSM 2310 (WO Amendment 2300-90-1).

[middot] The plan must indicate where established ROS classes, Scenic Character, and Scenic Integrity Objectives apply. Forest Plan modifications of where ROS, Scenic Character, and SIO direction applies (including maps) must follow amendment processes and not be addressed as an administrative change.

[middot] Modify the CDNST management corridor direction by adding the following plan components and eliminating proposed plan guidance that may conflict with the following direction:

1. Desired Condition: The CDNST provides for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and conserves natural, historic, and cultural resources along the corridor (nature and purposes).11

2. Desired Condition: Primitive or Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings<sup>12</sup> are protected or restored.
  3. Desired Condition: Scenic Character is Naturally Evolving or Natural-Appearing. Scenic Integrity Objective is Very High or High.<sup>13</sup>
  4. Standard: Resource management actions must be compatible with maintaining or restoring Primitive or Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS class settings.
  5. Standard: Motor vehicle use by the general public is prohibited unless that use:
    - a. Is necessary to meet emergencies;
    - b. Is necessary to enable adjacent landowners or those with valid outstanding rights to have reasonable access to their lands or rights;
    - c. Is for the purpose of allowing private landowners who have agreed to include their lands in the CDNST by cooperative agreement to use or cross those lands or adjacent lands from time to time in accordance with Forest Service regulations; or
    - d. Is on a motor vehicle route that crosses the CDNST, if that use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST;
    - e. Is designated in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212 Subpart B and:
      - i. The vehicle class and width were allowed on that segment of the CDNST prior to November 10, 1978, and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST or
      - ii. That segment of the CDNST was constructed as a road prior to November 10, 1978; or
    - f. In the case of over-snow vehicles, is allowed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart C and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST.<sup>14</sup>
  6. Suitability: The CDNST management corridor is not suitable for timber production. Timber harvest is not an objective.
- D. Completing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- Representatives Neguse and Fernandez introduced House of Representatives Bill 5118 titled the [ldquo]Continental Divide Trail Completion Act[rdquo] on August 27, 2021. The passage of H.R. 5118 could help protect and complete the CDNST through National Forest System and other lands in New Mexico. Specifically, Draft Plan, DEIS, and these objection recommendations support the direction in H.R. 5118 Section 2, which states, [ldquo](1) Complete the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail by acquiring land as necessary to eliminate gaps between sections of the Trail and secure corridors compatible with the nature and purposes of the Trail. (2) Optimize the Trail by relocating existing portions of the Trail on Federal land as necessary to maximize conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the Trail corridor.[rdquo]
- The proposed final revised Forest Plan does not protect the qualities and values of the CDNST, which will result in actions that perpetually prevent the CDNST from being completed with a protected corridor on the Santa Fe National Forest.
- E. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy
- See Section VI. CDNST Regulatory Planning Framework.

## Section II. ROS and SMS Review

The following discussion summarizes key elements of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Scenery Management System analyses protocols that are important to the understanding of issues brought forth in this objection. Following the 1986 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and 1995 Scenery Management System planning protocols would lead to analyses that would be consistent with the Department's Science Integrity policy, Planning Regulations Role of Science in Planning; Planning Rule requirement to use the Best Available Scientific Information to inform the planning process; and CEQ Methodology and Scientific Accuracy requirements (Departmental Regulation 1074-001, 36 CFR [sect] 219.3, and 40 CFR [sect] 1502.24 (2005)).

### A. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is a system by which existing and desired recreation settings are defined, classified, inventoried, established, and monitored. A recreation opportunity is a chance to participate in a specific recreation activity in a recreation setting to enjoy desired recreation experiences and other benefits that accrue. Recreation opportunities include non-motorized, motorized, developed, and dispersed recreation on land, water, and in the air. The recreation setting is the social, managerial, and physical attributes of a place that, when combined, provide a distinct set of recreation opportunities. The Forest Service uses the recreation opportunity spectrum to define recreation settings and categorize them into six distinct classes.

McCool, Clark, and Stankey in An Assessment of Frameworks Useful for Public Land Recreation Planning, General Technical Report PNW-GTR-705 states, [ldquo]Beginning in 1978, the concepts of an opportunity setting and spectrum of recreation opportunities were formalized as a planning framework in a series of significant papers involving two groups of researchers working with public land managers: (1) Roger Clark and George Stankey (Clark and Stankey 1979) and (2) Perry Brown and Bev Driver (Brown et al. 1978, Driver and Brown 1978, Driver et al. 1987). The series of papers that evolved described the rationale, criteria, and linkages that could be made to other resource uses. The goal of these papers was to articulate the concept of an opportunity spectrum and to translate it into a planning framework; today they serve to archive the fundamental rationale behind the ROS concept and planning framework. The ROS framework as a planning framework was oriented toward integrating recreation into the NFMA required forest management plans. Both the BLM and the Forest Service eventually developed procedures and user guides to do this (e.g., USDA FS 1982).[rdquo] McCool, Clark, and Stankey further describe that, [ldquo]The fundamental premise of ROS is that quality recreational experiences are best assured by providing a range or diversity of opportunities: by allowing visitors to make decisions about the settings they seek, there will be a closer match between the expectations and preferences visitors hold and the experiences they realize (Stankey 1999). Thus, underlying the ROS idea is the notion of a spectrum or diversity of opportunities that can be described as a continuum, roughly from developed to undeveloped.

Such opportunities are described by the setting. A setting is defined as the combination of attributes of a real place that gives it recreational value[hellip]

As both managers and scientists gained experience with ROS, and as collaboration continued, the efficacy of implementation also increased. The arrival of computer-based geographic information systems at about the same time as the implementation of ROS also enhanced its use as a framework for examining interactions between recreation and other resource uses and values. A major output of ROS was a map of a planning area displaying the spatial distribution of recreation opportunities. This was a distinct advance in resource management and enhanced the move away from reliance on tabular displays of data[hellip]

The ROS planning framework has become an important tool for public land recreation managers. Undoubtedly, its intuitive appeal and ease of integration with other resource uses and values are responsible for its widespread adoption and modification. Its strong science foundation, and the collaborative nature of its initial development

are probably also primary reasons why it has endured over a quarter century of natural resource planning. As a planning framework, ROS forces management to explicate fundamental assumptions, but in the process of moving through the framework, it allows reviewers to follow and understand results.[rdquo]

Roger Clark and George Stankey in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum [ndash] A Framework for Planning, Management, and Research, General Technical Report PNW-9816 states, [ldquo]The end product of recreation management is a diverse range of opportunities from which people can derive various experiences. This paper offers a framework for managing recreation opportunities based on six physical, biological, social, and managerial factors that, when combined, can be utilized by recreationists to obtain diverse experiences[hellip]

We define a recreation opportunity setting as the combination of physical, biological, social, and managerial conditions that give value to a place. Thus, an opportunity includes qualities provided by-nature (vegetation; landscape, topography, scenery), qualities associated with recreational use (levels and types of use), and conditions provided by management (developments, roads, regulations). By combining variations of these qualities and conditions,

management can provide a variety of opportunities for recreationists.[rdquo]

Recreation Opportunity settings are described using six factors: Access, Nonrecreational Resources Uses, Onsite Management, Social Interaction, Acceptability of Visitor Impacts, and Acceptable Level of Regimentation. The factor that is most closely related to the Scenery Management System is Non-recreational Resources Uses describing that, [ldquo]This factor considers the extent to which nonrecreational resource uses (grazing, mining, logging) are compatible with various opportunities for outdoor recreation. Other uses can severely conflict with opportunities for primitive experiences. For example, Stankey (1973) found that grazing in the Bridger Wilderness in Wyoming was the most serious source of conflict reported by visitors. In other cases, a variety of resource management activities that might even contribute to visitor enjoyment can be found in conjunction with outdoor recreation[hellip] Planners and managers must consider the lasting effects of a resource activity (mines, clearcuts), as well as short-term effects (logging trucks, noise from a mine) to determine the impacts on the recreational opportunity[hellip]

The recreation opportunity setting is composed of other natural features in addition to the six factors. Landform types, vegetation, scenery, water, wildlife, etc., are all important elements of recreation environments; they influence where people go and the kinds of activities possible.

Considerable work has gone into developing procedures for measuring and managing visual resources.[rdquo]

This technical report further states, [ldquo]The recreation opportunity spectrum provides a framework for integrating recreational opportunities and nonrecreational activities. The central notion of the spectrum is to offer recreationists alternative settings in which they can derive a variety of experiences. Because the management factors that give recreational value to a site are interdependent, management must strive to maintain consistency among these factors so that unplanned or undesired changes in the opportunities do not occur.[rdquo]

The 1986 ROS Book states, [ldquo]The physical setting is defined by the absence or presence of human sights and sounds, size, and the amount of environmental modification caused by human activity. The physical setting is documented by combining these three criteria as described below. Physical Setting - The physical setting is best defined by an area's degree of remoteness from the sights and sounds of humans, by its size, and by the amount of environmental change caused by human activity[hellip] (page II-11)

Chuck McConnell and Warren Bacon in the 1986 ROS Book state, [ldquo]Much of the success in managing



vegetation to achieve desired visual character and meet visual quality objectives in Roded Natural and Rural areas is tied to control of viewing positions primarily on roads, highways, and use areas. When the recreation user is traveling on trails or cross-country in Primitive or Semi-Primitive areas, near view becomes very evident. Recreation experience

opportunities, which are not as available in Roded Natural and Rural settings should become a primary goal. Some of these may include:

1. Obtaining privacy, solitude, and tranquility in an outdoor setting.
2. Experiencing natural ecosystems in environments which are largely unmodified by human activity.
3. Gaining a new mental perspective in a tranquil outdoor setting.
4. Self-testing and risk-taking for self-development and sense of accomplishment.
5. Learning more about nature, especially natural processes, human dependence on them, and how to live in greater harmony with nature. To the extent practical, these opportunities should be goals in all ROS settings on the National Forest System.

Any vegetative management must be quite subtle and for the purposes of creating and maintaining an attractive recreation setting that will offer these types of experience opportunities. Details such as the attributes of an old growth Forest (rotting logs with conks, large trees with distinctive bark, etc.,) become even more important in Primitive and Semi- Primitive than in Roded Natural and Rural. Providing human scale or created openings generally means they must be quite small with natural appearing forest floor, edge, shape, and disbursement. (page II-17)

The Forest Service 1986 ROS Red Book repeats information that is found in the 1982 ROS User Guide and provides ROS background information, reviews research, and adds land management planning guidance. The 1986 ROS Book states, "Settings are composed of three primary elements: The physical setting, the social setting, and the management setting. These three elements exist in various combination and are subject to managerial control so that diverse opportunity settings can be provided. These settings, however, are not ends in themselves.

Providing settings is a means of meeting the third aspect of demand, desired experiences. Settings are used for providing opportunities to realize specific experiences that are satisfying to the participant. In offering diverse settings where participants can pursue various activities, the broadest range of experiences can be realized. The task of the recreation planner and manager, then, is to formulate various combinations of activity and setting opportunities to facilitate the widest possible achievements of desired experiences--or to preserve options for various types of recreation opportunities (page II-19)

The Forest Service ROS User Guide and ROS Book state, "For management and conceptual convenience possible mixes or combinations of activities, settings, and probable experience opportunities have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum. This continuum is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and is divided into six classes (Table 1). The six classes, or portions along the continuum, and the accompanying class names have been selected and conventionalized because of their descriptiveness and utility in Land and Resource Management Planning and other management applications." (Table 1 is found in the 1982 ROS Users Guide on pages 7 and 8 and in the 1986 ROS Book on pages II-32 and II-33)

The Forest Service 1982 ROS User Guide further describes in part 21.23 that, [ldquo]Evidence of Humans is used as an indicator of the opportunity to recreate in environmental settings having varying degrees of human influence or modification. Apply the Evidence of Humans criteria given in Table 5 [repeated below] to determine whether the impact of human modification on the landscape is appropriate for each class designation on the inventory overlay. If the Evidence of Humans is more dominant than indicated for the designated Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class, adjust the class boundaries on the overlay so the designations accurately reflect the situation[hellip] The Evidence of Humans criteria for each Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class is primarily based on the visual impact and effect of modifications on the recreation experience,

as distinguished from only the physical existence of modifications. The criteria take into account the variation in visual absorption capacity of different landscapes.[rdquo]

The 1986 ROS Book states, [ldquo]The ROS helps planners identify different allocations of recreation, specifying where and what types of recreational opportunities might be offered and the implications and consequences associated with these different allocations. Because the ROS requires explicit definitions of different recreation opportunities, it facilitates comparisons between different alternatives. It also helps identify what specific actions might be needed in order to achieve certain allocations in the future. (page IV-32)

The explicit nature of the ROS assists managers in identifying and mitigating conflict. Because the ROS identifies appropriate uses within different recreation opportunities, it is possible to separate potentially incompatible uses. It also helps separate those uses that yield experiences that might conflict, such as solitude and socialization[hellip] (page IV-32)

The ROS also helps identify potential conflicts between recreation and non-recreation resource uses. It does this in several ways. First, it can specify the overall compatibility between a given recreation opportunity and other resource management activities. Second, it can suggest how the activities, setting quality, or likely experiences might be impacted by other non-recreation activities. Third, it can indicate how future land use changes might impact the present pattern of a recreation opportunity provision.[rdquo] (page IV-32)

The apparent naturalness of an area is highly influenced by the evidence of human developments. If the landscape is obviously altered by roads, railroads, reservoirs, power lines, pipe lines, or even by highly visual vegetative manipulations, such as clearcuttings, the area will not be perceived as being predominately natural. Even if the total acres of modified land are relatively small, "out of scale" modifications can have a negative impact[hellip] (page IV-33)

Management prescriptions 17are the building blocks for formulating planning alternatives, and for providing site specific management. Each prescription describes a set of compatible multiple- use management practices that will produce a particular mix of resource outputs. For example, one management area prescription might allow grazing and provide for primitive recreation opportunities, but permit only minimal water development structures and place strict controls on timber harvesting and mineral development. Another prescription for the same type of land might also permit grazing, but provide for roaded-natural recreation opportunities and allow for clearcutting and strip mining[hellip] (page IV-35)

The recreation opportunity spectrum provides a framework for integrating recreational opportunities and nonrecreational activities. The central notion of the spectrum is to offerrecreationists alternative settings in which they can derive a variety of experiences. Because the management factors that give recreational value to a site are interdependent, management must strive to maintain consistency among these factors so that unplanned or undesired changes in the opportunities do not occur.

Consistent with the 1986 ROS Book, a handbook titled Recreation Opportunity Setting as a Management Tool by George Stankey, Greg Warren, and Warren Bacon states, [ldquo]A recreation opportunity setting is defined as the combination of physical, biological, social, and managerial conditions that give value to a place[hellip] The seven indicators include access, remoteness, non- recreation uses, onsite management, visitor management, social encounters, and visitor impacts:

Access - Includes the type of transportation used by the recreationists within the area and the level of access development, such as trails and roads.

Remoteness - The distance of an area from the nearest road, access point, or center of human habitation or development.

Non-recreation uses, evidence of humans, and naturalness - Refers to the type and extent of non-recreation uses present in the area, such as timber harvesting, grazing, and mining.

On-site management - The on-site management indicator refers to modifications such as facilities, vegetation management, and site design.

Visitor management [ndash] Includes the management actions undertaken to maintain conditions and enhance visitor experiences within an ROS class.

Social encounters - The number, type, and character of other recreationists met in the area, along travel ways, or camped within sight or sound.

Visitor impacts - Includes those impacts caused by recreation use and affecting resources such as soil, vegetation, air, water, and wildlife[hellip].[rdquo]

The Recreation Opportunity Setting as a Management Tool handbook reviews Roaded Modified ROS setting considerations, on pages 22-24, which is not addressed in the 1982 ROS User Guide and 1986 ROS Book.18 Setting indicators are describe in part as, [ldquo]Roads are an integral part of these classes and provide a range of opportunities for users of high clearance vehicles on dirt roads to passenger cars on pavement. Roads may be closed to recreational use to meet other resource management objectives. In addition to roads, a full range of trail types and difficulty levels can be present in order to meet recreation objectives[hellip] The natural setting is often heavily altered as this environment and access throughout are often the result of intensive commodity production. Timber harvest, for example, is constrained primarily by the NFMA regulation of shaping and blending harvest units with the terrain to the degree practicable. Harvest activities should protect user-established sites from alteration and provide access to them. It should be used to meet other recreation needs such as provide trailhead access, parking areas, and a diversity of travelway opportunities[hellip].[rdquo] Where inventories of setting characteristics are not completely aligned with a specific ROS class, a determination should be made as to which class best represents the current specific setting. As a general rule, the physical characteristics take precedent over social and managerial characteristics. This is because social and managerial characteristics can often be altered through visitor use management techniques (permits, closures, etc.) where as the physical characteristics (size, remoteness, and others) are more permanent.

Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings are of greatest risk of being eliminated from available recreation opportunities as pressures increase to control insect and disease through vegetation management practices that include timber harvest and permanent and temporary roads. In addition, unauthorized OHV use and excessive mechanized use may displace traditional non-motorized users from these areas. In established Primitive and Semi- Primitive ROS settings, as adjacent lands are developed, minimizing any degradation of evidence of human indicators will increase in importance if remoteness protections diminish.

How are ROS setting inconsistencies addressed in providing for desired settings along a National Scenic Trail? An inconsistency is defined as a situation in which the condition of an indicator exceeds the range defined as acceptable by the management guidance. For example, the condition of the indicators for a National Scenic Trail corridor may all be consistent with its management as a semi-primitive non-motorized area except for the presence of a trailhead and access road. In such a case, what are the implications of the inconsistency? Does the inconsistency benefit or interfere with the nature and purposes of the National Scenic Trail?

What should be done about the inconsistency? Three general kinds of actions are possible. First, perhaps nothing can or should be done. It may be concluded that the inconsistency will have little or no effect on the area's general character. Alternatively, the agency may lack jurisdiction over the source of the inconsistency. A second response is to direct management action at the inconsistency to bring it back in line with the guidance established for the desired ROS class. The main point to be understood about inconsistencies is that they might be managed. The presence of one does not necessarily automatically lead to a change in ROS class. By analyzing its cause, implications, and possible solutions, an inconsistency may be handled in a logical and systematic fashion.

FSM 2310 (WO Amendment 2300-2020-1) [ndash] Sustainable Recreation Planning, approved on April 23, 2020, is reviewed in Appendix A of this objection.

#### B. Scenery Management System

The Scenery Management System (SMS) provides a systematic approach to inventory, assess, define, and monitor both existing and desired scenic resource conditions. Specific components of the SMS include scenic character, the degree of scenic diversity (scenic attractiveness), how and where people view the scenery (distance zones), the importance of scenery to those

viewing it (concern levels), and the desired degree of intactness (scenic integrity objectives). The following paraphrases discussions found in the Landscape Aesthetic Handbook.

There are several over-arching concepts of the SMS that facilitate the inclusion and integration of scenery resources with planning efforts. The SMS is grounded in an ecological context; recognizes valued aspects of the built environment; and incorporates constituent input about valued features (biophysical and human-made) of settings.

Scenic Attractiveness (ISA) classes are developed to determine the relative scenic value of lands within a Landscape Character. The three ISA classes are: Class A, Distinctive; Class B, Typical; Class C, Indistinctive. The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features, and water features are described in terms of their line, form, color, texture, and composition for each of these classes. The classes and their breakdown are generally displayed in a chart format. A map delineating the ISA classes is prepared.

The Scenic Character (aka Landscape Character) description is used as a reference for the Scenic Integrity of all lands. Scenic Integrity indicates the degree of intactness and wholeness of the Landscape Character; conversely, Scenic Integrity is a measure of the degree of visible disruption of the Landscape Character. A landscape with very minimal visual disruption is considered to have High Scenic Integrity. Those landscapes having increasingly discordant relationships among scenic attributes are viewed as having diminished Scenic Integrity. Scenic Integrity is expressed and mapped in terms of Very High, High, Moderate, Low, Very Low, and Unacceptably Low.

Constituent analysis serves as a guide to perceptions of attractiveness, helps identify special places, and helps to define the meaning people give to the subject landscape. Constituent analysis leads to a determination of the relative importance of aesthetics to the public; this importance is expressed as a Concern Level. Sites,

travelways, special places, and other areas are assigned a Concern Level value of 1, 2, or 3 to reflect the relatively High, Medium, or Low importance of aesthetics.

During the alternative development portion of the planning process, the potential and historical aspects of the Landscape Character Description are used to develop achievable Landscape Character Options consistent with other resource and social demands. Landscape Character Descriptions and associated Scenic Integrity Objectives are identified for each option and alternative. The desired Scenic Character and Scenic Integrity are included within the descriptions of the management area and geographic area desired conditions and standards and guidelines. Generally a Very High or High Scenic Integrity Objective is assigned to Wilderness and other statutorily designated areas.

Natural scenic character originates from natural disturbances, succession of plants, or indirect activities of humans. The existing scenic character continues to change gradually over time by

natural processes unless affected by drastic natural forces or indirect human activities. In a natural-appearing landscape, the existing landscape character has resulted from both direct and indirect human activities. Scenic character may have changed gradually over decades or centuries by plant succession unless a concerted effort was made to preserve and maintain cultural elements through processes such as prescribed fires.

Scenic integrity is defined as the degree of direct human-caused deviation in the landscape, such as roads, timber harvests, or activity debris. Indirect deviations, such as a landscape created by human suppression of the natural role of fire, are not included in scenic integrity evaluations. Natural occurring incidents, such as insects and disease infestations, are not defined as human-caused deviations in the landscape.

Scenic integrity objectives in the context of a forest plan are equivalent to desired conditions. Scenic integrity describes the state of naturalness or a measure of the degree to which a landscape is visually perceived to be [ldquo]complete.[rdquo] The highest scenic integrity ratings are given to those landscapes that have little or no deviation from the landscape character valued by constituents for its aesthetic quality. Scenic integrity is the state of naturalness or, conversely, the state of disturbance created by human activities or alteration.

The frame of reference for measuring achievement of scenic integrity levels is the valued attributes of the "existing" landscape character "being viewed.[rdquo] Naturally Evolving or Natural- Appearing Scenic Character is limited to natural or natural appearing vegetative patterns and features, water, rock, and landforms. Direct human alterations may be included if they have become accepted over time as positive landscape character attributes.

#### C. ROS and SMS Relationships

The relationship between the Scenery Management System and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum systems is discussed in the 1982 and 1986 ROS Users Guides. The FSM 2310 (WO Amendment 2300-90-1) policy guidance informed and was foundational for the recreation planning direction that is found in the 2012 planning rule and 2015 planning directives.

The Landscape Aesthetics Handbook. Landscape Aesthetics - A Handbook for Scenery Management (Agricultural Handbook Number 701); Appendix F - 1 - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum states:

[ldquo]Recreation planners, landscape architects, and other Forest Service resource managers are interested in providing high quality recreation settings, experiences, and benefits for their constituents. This is accomplished, in part, by linking the Scenery Management System and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) System. In addition, providing a single constituent inventory and analysis for both systems is helpful in coordinating management practices.

Esthetic value is an important consideration in the management of recreation settings. This is especially so in National Forest settings where most people expect a natural appearing

landscape with limited evidence of [un]natural disturbance of landscape features

In the past, there have been apparent conflicts between The Visual Management System sensitivity levels and ROS primitive or semi-primitive classes. One apparent conflict has been where an undeveloped area, having little existing recreation use and seldom seen from sensitive travel routes, was inventoried using The Visual Management System. The inventory led to a sensitivity level 3 classification, and thus apparently contradicted ROS inventory classes of primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized or semi-primitive motorized. Using criteria in The Visual Management System, in a variety class B landscape with a sensitivity level 3, the initial visual quality objective is [modification] or [maximum modification], depending on surrounding land classification. However, because of factors such as few social encounters, lack of managerial regimentation and control, and feelings of remoteness, the same area having little existing recreation use may establish an ROS primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, or semi-primitive motorized inventory classification. There have been concerns over the premise of The Visual Management System that the visual impact of management activities becomes more important as the number of viewers increases; yet, the ROS System emphasizes solitude, infrequent social encounters, and naturalness at the primitive end of the spectrum, with frequent social encounters and more evident management activities at the urban end. Value or importance is dependent on more than the number of viewers or users, and the key is that both the Scenery Management System and ROS are first used as inventory tools. Land management objectives are established during, not before, development of alternatives.

Where there does appear to be a conflict in setting objectives for alternative forest plans, the most restrictive criteria should apply. An example might be an undeveloped land area in a viewshed managed for both middleground partial retention and semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities. Semi-primitive non-motorized criteria are usually the more restrictive.

The Scenery Management System and ROS serve related, but different, purposes that affect management of landscape settings. In some cases, ROS provides stronger protection for landscape settings than does the Scenery Management System. This is similar to landscape setting protection provided by management of other resources, such as cultural resource management, wildlife management, and old-growth management. In all these examples, there may be management directions for other resources that actually provide higher scenic integrity standards than those reached by the Scenery Management System. Different resource values and systems (the Scenery Management System, the ROS System) are developed for differing needs, but they are all systems that work harmoniously if properly utilized

Evidence of Humans Criteria and the Visual Management System [dash] While in some ways it seems possible to equate Visual Quality Objectives, or a range of objectives, with each Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class the function of the Evidence of Humans Criteria in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is not the same as Visual Quality Objectives in the Visual Management

System and equating the two is not recommended. For example, middle and background Visual Management System areas are often where Primitive and Semi-Primitive Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes occur. A retention or partial retention Visual Quality Objective given to such an area for management direction could have a vastly different meaning than the delineated Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class. Thus, identify the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes through the setting descriptions in the Evidence of Humans

Criteria—Table 5] To assist in this, the Evidence of Humans Criteria are purposely worded differently than the definitions of Visual Quality Objectives. Table 5 is found in the 1982 ROS Users Guide on page 22 and in the 1986 ROS Book on page IV-10. The following exhibit displays the relationship between ROS class and Scenic Integrity Objectives (Landscape Aesthetics Handbook).

#### D. Recreation and Tourism Initiatives

Recreation & Tourism Initiative, Igniting Research for Outdoor Recreation: Linking Science, Policy, and Action, 2020, edited by Steven Selin and others, PNW-GTR-987 describes, Public lands provide opportunities and settings for people to experience nature and the outdoors.

These outdoor experiences are important for human health and well-being and result in visitor spending that benefits local communities. This report shows that new research, tools, and frameworks are needed to help us find new ways to conceptualize outdoor recreation and enhance the ability of public land managers to provide outdoor experiences while protecting natural and cultural resources.

The following reviews sections of this publication with quotes from the chapters with embedded remarks that reflect on several of the report propositions.

Chapter 1: The Shifting Outdoor Recreation Paradigm: Time for Change by Dale J. Blahna states, In general, the outdoor recreation paradigm tended to focus narrowly on the social science of visitor experiences, satisfaction, and economic values, while recreation ecology focused on the environmental impacts of recreation. A few integrative models were developed, such as VERP (visitor experience and resource protection) and LAC (limits of acceptable change), but these tools tend to be used rarely and they never grew or evolved into landscape-level models that could play key roles in decisionmaking or management planning like forest growth and yield, wildlife habitat, and fire spread models.

The 1986 Recreation Opportunity Setting as a Management Tool technical guide provided an integrated model for resource management on NFS lands. The guide for each ROS class described compatible recreation, timber, wildlife, range, and water resource relationships.

The emerging paradigm of outdoor recreation recognizes that humans are part of natural systems and that connecting with natural settings provides a broad range of human values and benefits that are not otherwise available, affirming these values and benefits to be essential for human health and well-being. As such, it is the responsibility of outdoor recreation professionals and agencies to increase public access and visitor diversity and expand the types of visitor experiences, opportunities, and benefits that people obtain from public lands, while simultaneously protecting the natural environment. Thus, the paradigm shift that is occurring in outdoor recreation has both a societal/conceptual component and an agency/practice component, and both require integrating social and environmental factors.

This statement improperly suggests there is a common belief that current recreation planning models do not address humans as being part of natural systems, while improperly diminishing the recognition that humans can modify the natural environment in a manner that could substantially reduce human health and well-being benefits. A concern is that use continues to increase without adequate measures to protect the natural environment. In addition, more primitive recreation settings that are sought by many recreationists continue to be degraded by resource development actions.

The recreation resource does not need to be a catch-all resource category for addressing the many dimensions of human connections to the natural environment. It is my experience that describing many aspects of native American use of public lands as recreation would be a mistake. The Arctic National Wildlife Range manager in 1977 asked that I include the Gwitchin and Inuit people in a visitor use questionnaire survey. These native people

continue to be part of the dynamics of the Refuge. After meeting with these people, it was clear that their connections and experiences in the Refuge would not be captured by my visitor use survey instrument. The dimensions of their use in the Refuge were complex and could not be readily described as recreation. Aspects of Gwitchin and Inuit use of public lands in Alaska were recognized and protected by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

[ldquo]Dated recreation planning tools, a downward trajectory for appropriated government funding, and shifting societal values and growing diversity all lend urgency to the need for new ways of thinking about our profession and new practices in recreation management. Outdoor recreation is still viewed as a secondary consideration in decisionmaking by federal land management agencies, with resource production and environmental protection values dominant. Ironically, recreation access and use are the primary ways that Americans connect with public lands, and public lands could be viewed as an essential component of the nation[rsquo]s health infrastructure.

We need to act now for three reasons: (1) natural systems will benefit from a better relationship

with human society, (2) there is an immediate need for increased government support for recreation management and infrastructure, and (3) public lands require consistent and more public support if they are to continue to exist as a valued component of our well-being[hellip]

The anomalies and emerging agency initiatives are the converse of the assumptions underlying the current paradigm. Although solitude, remoteness, traditional uses, counting visitors, and reducing onsite conflicts will always be important parts of public lands recreation management, they are not and should not be the primary focus of the new and emerging goals of sustainable recreation. Recognizing different cultural beliefs and expectations regarding human-nature interactions, expanding understanding and measurement of the diversity of benefits of human-nature contacts, and creating an outdoor recreation ecosystem science will require significant changes for both recreation research and agency management, not unlike the scientific revolutions in fire and wildlife ecology in the 20th century[hellip][rdquo]

The statement that recreation planning tools are dated is not substantiated. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, as envisioned in 1986, would continue to be an effective recreation resource integration tool in forest planning if properly implemented. However, over the last several years the agencies have tended to move away from managing recreation settings; instead, recreation management has been mostly focused on recreation activities. In 2020, the Forest Service FSM 2310 recreation planning directive was modified, which will further diminish the role that the recreation resource will have in multiple use decision making. The ROS planning framework and Limits of Acceptable Change will continue to contribute to integrated planning for multiple use programs if their protocols are adhered to by agencies.

Chapter 5: Rethinking [ldquo]Outdoor Recreation[rdquo] to Account for the Diversity of Human Experiences and Connections to Public Lands, Dale Blahna and others state, [ldquo]A challenge for recreation managers is overcoming the trap of past mental models that have focused on the notion that recreation is a mix of a small set of activities and a small set of settings that result in recreation satisfaction and then a resultant desired benefit. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), for example, which is the dominant recreation analysis tool of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is a case in point[hellip][rdquo]

The BLM no longer uses the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. The current BLM recreation framework is the Recreation Setting Characteristics (BLM H-8320-1). The BLM states, [ldquo]the ROS process mapped the physical, social, and operational RSCs separately and then combined all maps into one final composite map. This often resulted in inconsistencies between the physical, social, and operational recreation settings. The conflicts were resolved by emphasizing the physical character of the landscape or averaging the differences. Unfortunately, this often resulted in a misrepresentation of the social and operational qualities of the recreation area, making the ROS difficult to understand and implement. In response, the BLM has modified the



application of the ROS by not requiring the integration of the physical, social, and operational RSCs into one final composite map.[rdquo]

This change may reduce the ability of the BLM to protect recreation settings. To protect the qualities and values of National Scenic and Historic Trails, the BLM should use the ROS planning framework.

[ldquo]The ROS is an abstraction of human experiences that classifies an agency[rsquo]s lands into six very general categories (urban, rural, roaded natural, semi-primitive motorized, semi-primitive non- motorized, and primitive) based on seven criteria (remoteness, access, naturalness, facilities, social encounters, visitor impacts, and management characteristics). This abstraction has taken the diversity of the natural world and our relationship to it and has reduced the richness and complexity of our imagination. Today, the ROS appears overly reductionist and does not recognize the simultaneous effects of incongruous setting characteristics and personal and social experiences in time, space, mind, or memory.[rdquo]

The ROS is based on the idea that visitors participate in different recreation activities in different settings in order to realize certain experiences. There are many different types of experiences. Some relate to solitude, risk, and challenge and we typically associate these with opportunities at the primitive end of the spectrum. Others relate to meeting and enjoying others or family togetherness. The Forest Service planning directives, consistent with the ROS planning framework, states [ldquo]The interdisciplinary team is encouraged to use new approaches for managing recreation within the plan area. The interdisciplinary team should be proactive in developing a coherent system of sustainable and socially compatible recreation opportunities.[rdquo]

ROS setting attributes provide for a degree of integration with other resources, which are important elements of achieving desired experiences. The recreation opportunity setting is composed of other natural features in addition to the six factors. Landform types, vegetation, scenery, water, wildlife, etc., are all important elements of recreation environments; they influence where people go and the kinds of activities possible. Considerable work has gone into developing procedures for measuring and managing visual resources.

[ldquo]Like ROS, most visitor management concepts and tools used today were developed in the 1970s and 1980s. They reflect the post-World War II [ldquo]recreation boom[rdquo] mentality, when a new generation of recreationists provided new challenges to managers, and recreation use levels, visitor conflicts, resource impacts, and crowding became dominant agency concerns. In the 21st century, agency policies and leadership priorities are emphasizing increasing visitor use and access, diversifying the visitor base, enhancing experiences, sharing stewardship, and expanding collaborators in land management and decisionmaking. As noted in the prologue, these are very different from the boom era concerns, and concepts like visitor satisfaction, specialization, and

carrying capacity are ghosts of past models that are limiting our ability to address today[rsquo]s challenges[hellip][rdquo]

Agencies continue to face new generations of recreationists that provide new challenges to managers. Visitor conflicts, crowding, and resource issues have not been abated. Plus, these continuing issues are confounded by agency policies and leadership priorities that emphasize increasing visitor use and access, enhancing experiences, increased resource production that diminish recreation opportunities, and establishing management priorities that reduce recreation budgets and the number of professional wildland recreation management specialists. Wildland recreation planning and management specialists would help ensure that the agency had adequate subject matter expertise to address the recreation resource.

Chapter 12: Integrating Social, Ecological, and Economic Factors in Sustainable Recreation Planning and Decisionmaking by Dale J. Blahna and others state, [ldquo]If a primary objective of sustainable recreation is

sustaining both recreation experiences and environmental conditions while encouraging increasing recreation use and visitor diversity, we know little about how to integrate with broader system resilience objectives. And goals conceived in this way will require newer and more integrated sets of principles and practices than are currently available to managers. Existing recreation management tools are limited, and existing large-scale planning and decision frameworks tend to be very complex and based on generic systems characteristics and standardized metrics, rather than context and place-specific issues. Different research approaches are needed to develop a new generation of integrated principles and practices.[rdquo]

The ROS planning framework continues to be an important tool for integrated resource land management planning. Its intuitive appeal and ease of integration with other resource uses and values are responsible for its widespread adoption and modification. It has a strong science foundation. As a planning framework, ROS forces management to explicate fundamental assumptions, but in the process of moving through the framework, it allows agency and public reviewers to follow and understand results. There is no evidence that protecting natural settings using the ROS planning framework is subjectively limiting the ability of the agencies to address current human use needs and challenges.

It should not be assumed that different research approaches will lead to the development of a new generation of integrated principles and effective practices. The ROS planning framework was not intended to never change, but modifications to the ROS planning framework, and changes to other planning models, should only occur through robust public involvement processes and be based on science.

[ldquo]Humans Need Nature. Nature Needs Protection. Protected areas serve as a critical conservation tool for protecting nature and biodiversity. Humans also depend on intact ecosystems and benefit from the environmental services they provide. Guaranteeing the

effective use and management of protected areas will ensure that all future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits they provide. Protected areas require adept, well-trained personnel and strong partnerships to deal with many challenges including lack of funding, undertrained personnel and personnel shortages, and an ever-increasing list of traditional and emerging transboundary threats[hellip].[rdquo] (Warner College of Natural Resources)

#### E. Ecosystem Integrity and Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

The Forest Plan refers to forest health and restoration projects and activities. The Planning Rule states, [ldquo]The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to maintain or restore the ecological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds in the plan area, including plan components to maintain or restore structure, function, composition, and connectivity...[rdquo] (36 CFR [sect] 219.8(a)(1)). Ecological integrity is defined as, [ldquo]The quality or condition of an ecosystem when its dominant ecological characteristics (for example, composition, structure, function, connectivity, and species composition and diversity) occur within the natural range of variation and can withstand and recover from most perturbations imposed by natural environmental dynamics or human influence[rdquo] (36 CFR [sect] 219.19).

The Forest Service states, [ldquo]Agency intent is to promote ecosystem integrity in the plan area. However, it may not be possible or appropriate to strive for returning key characteristics to past conditions throughout the plan area[hellip] Understanding the natural range of variation is fundamental in strategic thinking and planning, even if restoration to historical conditions is not the management goal or possible on parts of the plan area. Understanding the natural range of variation of an ecosystem provides an understanding of how ecosystems are dynamic and change over time. The natural range of variation is useful for understanding each specific ecosystem, for understanding its existing ecological conditions, and for understanding its likely future character, based on projections of climate regimes[rdquo] (FSH 1909.12 23.11a). [ldquo]Plans must contain plan components, including standards or guidelines, that maintain or restore the composition, structure, ecological

processes, and connectivity of plan area ecosystems in a manner that promotes their ecological integrity” (FSH 1909.12 23.11b). “Desired conditions should define and identify fire’s role in the ecosystem” (FSH 1909.12 23.11c).

The scenic character and recreation settings of the planning area must be addressed in the context of ecosystem integrity and diversity. It is important to understand the spatial extent and distribution of ecosystems and habitat types and spatial relationships to the natural range of variation. Understanding these relationships is critical to addressing scenic character and recreation setting stability along the CDNST corridor.

Scenic stability and sustainable recreation in an ecological context are the degree to which the scenic character and recreation settings can be sustained through time with ecological progression. Scenic and setting stability may be at risk if the landscape vegetation is outside the

natural range of variation. Older forested areas may be at risk from large intense wildfires and be subject to land clearing from timber harvest, road construction, and other developments in Roaded Natural/Roaded Modified ROS settings as defined by the 1986 ROS Book. The Land Management Plan and related EIS should describe how much land could be devoted to timber production, mechanical treatments, and associated actions and activities while still meeting requirements for ecological integrity.

The natural range of variation analyses can be used to assess the scenic and setting stability of forest landscapes. This can be measured in terms of the landscape’s departure from the natural range of variation and rate of seral-stage change. Seral-stage communities consist of vegetation types that are adapted to the site’s set of physical and biotic conditions. In the unmanaged forested landscape, various natural disturbance agents (such as fire, wind-throw, landslides, and insects) are responsible for creating forests containing a full range of stand ages.

Departures in fire regime, extensive insect outbreaks, excessive timber production, development of permanent and temporary roads, and other disturbances from the natural range of variation and the rate of seral-stage change may affect scenic stability and sustainable recreation.

Sustainable recreation is the set of recreation settings and opportunities on the National Forest System that is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generations. In statutorily designated areas such as the CDNST rights-of-way corridor, limited prescribed fire or non-intervention policies are often the desired approach in order to promote natural processes and natural rejuvenation. Outside of protected areas including Roaded Natural and Roaded Modified settings, interventions may include removal of infected and dead trees or clear cuts, associated roads, and then followed by artificial reforestation. In addition, the Santa Fe Plan if implemented would allow similar interventions in Semi-Primitive ROS settings, which is inconsistent with the 1982/1986 ROS planning framework conventions.

Mark Swanson and others describe that, “Early-successional forest ecosystems that develop after stand-replacing or partial disturbances are diverse in species, processes, and structure. Post-disturbance ecosystems are also often rich in biological legacies, including surviving organisms and organically derived structures, such as woody debris. These legacies and post-disturbance plant communities provide resources that attract and sustain high species diversity, including numerous early-successional obligates, such as certain woodpeckers and arthropods. Early succession is the only period when tree canopies do not dominate the forest site, and so this stage can be characterized by high productivity of plant species (including herbs and shrubs), complex food webs, large nutrient fluxes, and high structural and spatial complexity.

Different disturbances contrast markedly in terms of biological legacies, and this will influence the resultant physical and biological conditions, thus affecting successional pathways.

Management activities, such as post-disturbance logging and dense tree planting, can reduce

the richness within and the duration of early-successional ecosystems. Where maintenance of biodiversity is an objective, the importance and value of these natural early-successional ecosystems are often underappreciated.

Naturally occurring, early-successional ecosystems on forest sites have distinctive characteristics, including high species diversity, as well as complex food webs and ecosystem processes. This high species diversity is made up of survivors, opportunists, and habitat specialists that require the distinctive conditions present there. Organic structures, such as live and dead trees, create habitat for surviving and colonizing organisms on many types of recently disturbed sites. Traditional forestry activities (e.g., clearcutting or post-disturbance logging) reduce the species richness and key ecological processes associated with early-successional ecosystems; other activities, such as tree planting, can limit the duration (e.g., by plantation establishment) of this important successional stage.

Forest ecological integrity assessments must clearly describe the quality or condition of an ecosystem that may need to be restored. Forest restoration is a range of actions that strive to manage a forest in a way that reflects its historical ecological state in a certain place. This can include replanting or reintroducing native plants and animals, mechanical thinning, and prescribed burning to replicate historical tree densities, removal of invasive species, or returning physical processes, including fire behavior, functioning streams, and floodplains to a more natural and resilient state.

The goal of forest health projects should be the same as the goal of restoration which is not to recreate a specific appearance, but to reduce the effects of past human activities, such as clearcutting, fire suppression, and roads. Proposed actions to enhance forest resiliency and improve ecological integrity should clearly explain how management actions will increase age class, structural, and vegetation diversity across the landscape. Harvesting live trees in areas of extensive tree mortality, especially if temporary or new permanent roads are needed for the action, would not contribute to forest resiliency, and improve ecological integrity.

Successful restoration of any road entails many steps. It requires ripping up the road bed to remove the compacted soil layers. The side slope soil must be put back on the site, and reshaped so sub surface and surface water flow are restored. Culverts need to be removed, and stream channels fully restructured and reconstituted. Native vegetation needs to be planted and logs, rocks, and other natural structures need to be put back on the slope. Long-term monitoring of restoration actions is critical to ensure that desired site conditions are achieved and sustained.

Restoration actions may be limited by natural resource, designated area, and Primitive and Semi-Primitive ROS setting management constraints. Roads may need to be reclaimed if Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS class conditions are to be restored or recovered.

### Section III. Statement of Issues [ndash] Proposed Plan

The following are statements of the issues to which the objection applies and concise statements explaining the objection and suggestions on how the proposed plan decision may be improved.

Plan components should be integrated, written clearly, concisely, and without ambiguity, and include desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, goals, and suitability-of-land determinations. Taken together, plan components establish the vision of a plan, set forth the strategy to achieve it, and provide the constraints of subsequent management.

#### A. Recreation

Forest Plan: The Santa Fe plan beginning on page 130 describes CDNST recreation plan components.

Standards for Dispersed Recreation (FW-DISREC-S)

- 1 Motorized uses are prohibited in ROS settings desired to be primitive.
- 2 Motorized uses are prohibited in semiprimitive-nonmotorized desired ROS settings, except for necessary administrative activities, permitted activities, and emergency access.
- 3 In semiprimitive-nonmotorized desired ROS settings, no new permanent motorized routes or areas shall be constructed or designated. Temporary motorized routes or road construction in semiprimitive-nonmotorized settings must be rehabilitated within 2 years of project completion.
- 4 Impacts to recreation opportunities resulting from the construction of temporary roads, facilities, and structures needed for management activities must be mitigated upon completion of the project.

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Development guidance for Semi-Primitive ROS settings is inconsistent with Semi-Primitive ROS class desired conditions as described in the ROS planning framework.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: For Primitive and SPNM ROS allocations, any existing designated motorized roads, trails, and areas must be managed to minimize their effects on the Primitive and SPNM settings. Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized setting desired conditions should include a description of Evidence of Humans that includes a statement that [ldquo]Natural setting may have subtle modifications that would be noticed but not draw the

attention of an observer wandering through the area.[rdquo] In addition, Semi-Primitive Non- Motorized and Semi-Primitive Motorized settings should be described as not being suitable for timber production. See Section I Part C of this objection.

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 3 [ndash] 8. CDNST Planning Handbook (Handbook) Chapter III Part F. New information in the FEIS.

Violation of law, regulation or policy: 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.10(a), 36 CFR [sect] 219.10(b)(1)(i); FSH 1909.12 part 23, FSH 1909.12 part 23.23a.

#### B. Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Forest Plan: The Santa Fe Plan presents CDNST plan components that do not reflect the nature and purposes of the CDNST. The following are brief discussions that display and describe some of the issues with the Final Forest Plan CDNST plan components as reviewed in Draft Plan comments.

The Santa Fe plan beginning on page 185 describes CDNST plan components.

#### Desired Conditions for Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

- 1 The CDNST is a well-defined trail in a highly scenic setting that provides for high-quality primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities, and other compatible non-motorized trail activities. Significant scenic, natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST[rsquo]s corridor are conserved. {{There are elements of this description that do not align with the Comprehensive Plan. I recommend retaining the nature and purposes language that is found in the Comprehensive Plan.}}
- 2 Viewsheds from the CDNST have high scenic values. The CDNST provides visitors with expansive views of the natural landscapes along the Continental Divide. The foreground of the CDNST (up to 0.5 mile on either side) is natural-appearing. {{This guidance is a forest planning requirement and is irrelevant to plan implementation.}}
- 3 The CDNST has access points that provide various opportunities to select the type of terrain, scenery, and trail length (e.g., ranging from long-distance to day use) that best provide for compatible outdoor recreation

experiences. a Wild and remote backcountry segments of the CDNST provide opportunities for solitude, immersion in natural landscapes, and primitive outdoor recreation. b Front-country and easily accessible trail segments complement local community interests and needs and help contribute to their sense of place. {{This conflicts with the nature and purposes of the CDNST.}}

6 The trail is well-maintained, signed, and passable. Alternate routes are made available in the case of temporary closures resulting from natural events, such as fire or flood, or land management activities[hellip] {{Management activities are constrained to those actions that do not substantially interfere with the CDNST nature and purposes.}}

#### Guidelines for Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

1 The corridor around the CDNST should be defined by either the foreground (0.5 mile on either side; see Appendix A, Fig. 10) or based on the Scenery Management System viewshed, which shows the landscape area visible from the trail based on topography. .

{{CDNST corridor designation guidance is a forest planning requirement and is irrelevant to plan implementation.}}

2 To retain or promote the character for which the CDNST was designated, the corridor should be consistent with primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized desired ROS classes. a The corridor may intermittently pass through more developed settings. {{CDNST corridor designation guidance is a forest planning requirement and is irrelevant to plan implementation.}} b The CDNST provides for a continuous route through predominately undeveloped settings. c New or relocated trail segments should be located primarily within these settings. d Road and motorized trail crossings and other signs of modern development should be avoided. {{Guidance in a-c are forest planning requirements and are irrelevant to plan implementation.}}

3 To protect or enhance the scenic qualities of the CDNST, management activities should be consistent with scenic integrity objectives of high or very high within the foreground of the trail (up to 0.5 mile either side).

{{If management activities {{that do not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST, but}} result in short-term impacts to the scenic character along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, mitigation measures should be included (e.g., screening, feathering, and other scenery management techniques), to minimize visual impacts at key points (e.g., vistas), within 0.5 mile either side of the trail.}}

4 If management activities result in short-term impacts to the scenic character along the CDNST, mitigation measures should be included (e.g., screening, feathering, and other scenery management techniques) to minimize visual impacts and achieve mapped scenic integrity objectives in the trail corridor. {{To protect or enhance the scenic qualities of the CDNST, management activities should be consistent with scenic integrity {{level}} objectives of high or very high within the foreground of the trail. SIO should be a Desired Condition.}}

10 Except where the CDNST follows a road, the trail should not be used for landings (e.g., timber, slash, decking) or as a temporary road. Hauling or skidding along the trail itself should be allowed only when design features are used to minimize impacts to the trail infrastructure and: a where the CDNST is currently located on an open road, and b no other haul route or skid trail options are available. {{There are many issues with this guidance. In short, the CDNST is not to be located on road where timber haul is allowed. In these cases, the

revised plan is to identify and protect a high potential route segments to resolve the issue. Locating the CDNST route to the high-potential segment should be a plan objective.}}

11 Unplanned fires in the foreground (up to 0.5 mile) of the CDNST should be managed using minimum impact suppression tactics or other tactics appropriate for protecting CDNST values. Prescribed fires in the foreground of the trail should be managed to incorporate the values of the CDNST. Heavy equipment fire-line construction within the CDNST corridor should not be allowed unless necessary for emergency protection of life and property.

12 Uses that could conflict with the nature and purpose of the CDNST should be prohibited when it is determined that the use would interfere with the nature and purpose of the trail.

{{Uses are prohibited when the use will substantially interfere with the nature and purposes the CDNST.

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Forest Plan promotes management activities and uses within the CDNST corridor that are not compatible with the nature and purposes as described in the CDNST Comprehensive Plan and policy. The CDNST is further discussed in Section IV Part F of this objection[mdash]responses to comments.

The primary area of concern is along the CDNST between the Chama River Canyon Wilderness and San Pedro Parks Wilderness, which is proposed to be managed for Roded Natural and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS class conditions with timber production as depicted below.

These settings and activities if implemented would lead to actions that substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST, which is not allowed by the National Trails System Act.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: Appropriate CDNST plan components and the location of where to apply those components is described in Section I Part C of this objection. The Plan (and FEIS) should state, [ldquo]To maintain designated area qualities, [hellip] the CDNST management corridor is not suitable for timber production.[rdquo]

Violation of law, regulation or policy: USDA DR 1074-001; 36 U.S.C. [sect] 216; 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1244(f), 1246(a)(2), 1246(c); E.O. 13195; CDNST Comprehensive Plan Chapter III.E Land Management Planning (74 FR 51124), Chapter IV.A Nature and Purposes (74 FR 51124), Chapter IV.B.4 Scenery Management (74 FR 51124), Chapter IV.B.5, Recreation Management (74 FR 51125), and Chapter IV.B.6 Motorized Use (74 FR 51125); 16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(1); 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.3, 219.7, 219.9(a)(1), 219.10(a), 219.10(b)(1)(vi), 219.11(a)(1)(iii); FSM 2353.44b; FSH

1909.12 23.11b; and FSH 1909.12 Part 24.43.

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 18[ndash]15. Handbook Chapter III Part D and J.

### C. References

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Santa Fe proposed Forest Plan does not include important references.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: The 1986 ROS Book and 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan should be added to references:

[middot] USDA Forest Service. 1986. ROS Book. Washington DC: Washington Office.

[middot] USDA Forest Service. 2009. Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan. Washington DC. Washington Office.

Violation of law, regulation or policy: 36 CFR [sect] 219.3; 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1244(f)

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 13.

#### D. Glossary

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Santa Fe Forest Plan definitions are incomplete.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: The glossary should add important definitions to support proposed Forest Plan:

[middot] National Trails System Act of 1968. Public Law 90-543 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1241- 1251), which establishes the National Trails System.

[middot] National Scenic Trail. Congressionally designated trail that is a long-distance trail so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary use or uses of the areas through which such trails may pass.

[middot] Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classes. ROS class desired conditions must be compatible with the 1986 ROS Book descriptions. The definitions beginning on page 274 of the Santa Fe Plan should be modified.

o Primitive ROS Class Desired Conditions. Setting: The area is essentially an unmodified natural environment. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. Experience: Very high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of outdoor skill in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk. Evidence of Humans: Evidence of humans would be un-noticed by an observer wandering through the area. Natural ecological processes such as fire, insects, and disease exist. The area may provide for wildlife connectivity across landscapes. Primitive ROS settings contain no motorized and mechanized vehicles and there is little probability of seeing other groups. They provide quiet solitude away from roads and people or

other parties, are generally free of human development, and facilitate self-reliance and discovery. Signing, and other infrastructure is minimal and constructed of rustic, native materials. Scenic Integrity Objective is Very High.

o Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS Class Desired Conditions. Setting: The area is predominantly a natural-appearing environment where natural ecological processes such as fire, insects, and disease exist. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Experience: High probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of outdoor skill in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk. Evidence of Humans: Natural setting may have subtle modifications that would be noticed but not draw the attention of an observer wandering through the area. The area provides opportunities for exploration, challenge, and self-reliance. The area may contribute to wildlife connectivity corridors. Closed roads may be present, but are managed to not dominate the landscape or detract from the naturalness of the area. Rustic structures such as signs and footbridges are occasionally present to direct use and/or protect the setting's natural and cultural resources. Scenic Integrity Objective is High.

o Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS Class Desired Conditions. Setting: The area is predominantly a natural-



appearing environment. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Experience: Moderate probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk. Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Opportunity to use motorized equipment. Evidence of Humans: Natural setting may have moderate alterations, but would not draw the attention of motorized observers on trails and primitive roads within the area. The area provides for motorized recreation opportunities in backcountry settings. Vegetation management does not dominate the landscape or detract from the experience of visitors. Visitors challenge themselves as they explore rugged landscapes. Scenic Integrity Objective is Moderate.

o Roaded Natural ROS Class Desired Conditions. Setting: The area is predominantly natural-appearing environments with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of human activities. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities. Experience: About equal

probability to experience affiliation with other user groups and for isolation from sights and sound of humans. Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities associated with a more primitive type of recreation are not very important. Practice and testing of outdoor skills might be important. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation are possible. Evidence of Humans: Natural settings may have modifications, which range from being easily noticed to strongly dominant to observers within the area. However, from sensitive travel routes and use areas these alternations would remain unnoticed or visually subordinate. The landscape is generally natural with modifications moderately evident. Concentration of users is low to moderate, but facilities for group activities may be present. Challenge and risk opportunities are generally not important in this class. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized activities are present. Construction standards and facility design incorporate conventional motorized uses. The Roaded Modified subclass includes areas that exhibit evidence of extensive forest management activities that are dominant on the landscape, including having high road densities, heavily logged areas, highly visible mining, oil and gas, wind energy, or other similar uses and activities. Scenic Integrity Objective is Low. Desired Scenic Character may be described as [ldquo]Agricultural[rddquo] expressing dominant human agricultural land uses producing domestic products.

o Rural ROS Class Desired Conditions. Setting: Area is characterized by substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by many people. Facilities are often provided for special activities. Moderate densities are provided far away from developed sites. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking are available. Experience: Probability for experiencing affiliation with individuals and groups is prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. These factors are generally more important than the setting of the physical environment. Opportunities for wildland challenges, risk-taking, and testing of outdoor skills are generally unimportant except for specific activities like downhill skiing, for which challenge and risk-taking are important elements. Evidence of Humans: Natural setting is culturally modified to the point that it is dominant to the sensitive travel route observer. May include intensively managed wildland resource landscapes. Pedestrian or other slow-moving observers are constantly within view of the culturally changed landscape.

Violation of law, regulation or policy: 36 CFR [sect] 219.3.

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 3 [ndash] 8, 17, and 25. Handbook Chapter VI.

#### Section IV. Statement of Issues [ndash] FEIS

The following are statements of the issues to which the objection applies and concise statements explaining the objection and suggestions on how the FEIS may be improved.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued guidance in 2014 on effective use of programmatic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews. CEQ states that, [ldquo]NEPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of a proposed action and any reasonable alternatives on the human environment. Those effects include, among others, impacts on social, cultural, economic, and natural resources. To implement NEPA, agencies undertake an assessment of the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. The NEPA review process is an integral and valuable tool for public engagement and thoughtful decisionmaking, a process that often produces more sound analysis and information that the federal government might otherwise overlook[hellip][rdquo]

Forest Plan geographic bounded areas include a National Forest as a whole, Geographic Areas, Management Areas, and the extent of designated areas such as the area within a Wild and Scenic River established boundary (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1274(b)) and a selected right-of-way (or defined National Trail Management Corridor) for National Scenic and Historic Trails (16 U.S.C.

[sect] 1246(a)(2)). Each agency zoned area has unique desired conditions and standards and

guidelines that constraint use so that desired conditions are not degraded.

[ldquo]The agency is obligated to conduct a meaningful impact analysis in accordance with NEPA, and that analysis should be commensurate with the nature and extent of potential impacts of the decision being made. A programmatic NEPA review should contain sufficient discussion of the relevant issues and opposing viewpoints to enable the decisionmaker to take a [ldquo]hard look[rdquo] at the environmental effects and make a reasoned choice among alternatives. There should be enough detail to enable those who did not have a part in its compilation to understand and meaningfully consider the factors involved.[rdquo]

For each NEPA defined geographic area which includes the CDNST management corridor, NEPA reviews should describe the desired conditions for each area and how related standards and guidelines would constrain actions and prevent degradation. A NEPA document must contain sufficient information to foster informed decision-making and informed public participation.

Otherwise, the decision would not be in conformance with 42 U.S.C. [sect] 4332(2)(C) and would therefore not be in accordance with law under 5 U.S.C. [sect] 706(2)(A) and not in be in observance of procedure required by law under 5 U.S.C. [sect] 706(2)(D).

#### A. Alternatives

FEIS: The FEIS Volume 1 on page 26 states, [ldquo]Federal agencies are required by the National Environmental Policy Act to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received during the plan revision process provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these suggestions may have been outside the scope of the plan revision process, already addressed by the alternatives considered in detail, or may be contrary to existing law.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: None of the alternatives addressed CDNST concerns and legal requirements for addressing reasonable alternatives.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: Issue a Supplemental EIS that includes at least one alternative that identifies CDNST high potential route segment corridors that are protected with plan components that provide for the nature and purposes of this National Scenic Trail. The corridors of high potential route segments may need to have an extent that is greater than one- mile to allow for future site-specific travel route layout considerations.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1244(f), 1246(c); 40 C.F.R. [sect] 1502.14.

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 15-17. Handbook Chapter IV Part C.

#### B. Affected Environment Recreation Settings and Opportunities

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 1 beginning on page 407 states, [ldquo]The intent of recreation management in the Santa Fe NF is to provide a range of opportunities that allow visitors to have a diversity of experiences depending on their preferences and interests. Recreation opportunities are key indicators of how each alternative would affect management of the recreation program. The desired recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) has been used to map the Santa Fe NF by the most applicable types of recreation opportunities desired for an area. The ROS is a continuum used for managing recreation opportunities based on a combination of physical, biological, social, and managerial settings, ranging from primeval to paved (Clark and Stankey, 1979). The ROS represents management objectives and not actual user experience. The physical setting is defined by the absence or presence of human sights and sounds, size of area, and the amount of environmental modification caused by human activity. The social setting reflects the amount and type of contact between individuals or groups. The managerial setting is distinguished by the amount and kind of restrictions placed on people[rsquo]s actions by the respective administering agency or private landowner (USDA Forest Service 1986).[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The FEIS appropriately references the 1986 ROS User Guide, but the ROS class characterizations are incomplete.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. ROS class definitions need to be expanded to add descriptions of Non-Recreation Uses and Evidence of Humans.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1502.15

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 3-8 and 17. New Information.

#### C. Environmental Consequences for Recreation

FEIS: Santa Fe FEIS Volume 1 on beginning on page 416 states, [ldquo]Vegetation treatments (i.e., thinning and burning) have the potential to alter ROS classes from those that are predominantly natural-appearing (i.e., P, SPNM, SPM, RN) to those with more modified environments (i.e., R or U). Mechanical treatments and prescribed burning actions would be consistent with managing for predominantly natural-appearing environments of P, SPNM, SPM, and RN ROS classes RE11, even though they would be visually evident (RE9). However, these treatments could result in more open environments and changes in recreation opportunities (RE4, RE9, RE10) by increasing the evidence of other users which may not be consistent with SPNM and SPM ROS classes RE12. In contrast, primitive ROS classes would not have similar effects (RE12) because most of the primitive areas in the forest are in Wilderness where mechanical treatments could not occur or are in less popular parts of the forest where the chance of encountering other users is always low RE13[hellip].[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The described effects indicate that the proposed plan and alternatives fail to protect more primitive desired ROS settings from the effects of road building and vegetation treatments that

require heavy equipment. These alternatives should have been dismissed from development, since they fail to provide for the integrated resource management of the forest. The appropriate ROS setting allocation for development areas should have been described as Roded Modified.

The EIS must disclose the effects of changes to ROS desired conditions for Semi-Primitive ROS settings. A Supplemental FEIS needs to include at least a minimal discussion of effects for the proposed action and alternatives resulting from these changed definitions such as describing that:

Reasonable and foreseeable future actions and activities in RN and SPM ROS settings include an increase in mechanical treatment of vegetation and additional roads. Resulting forest conditions may resemble a Roded Modified ROS setting, which is used to describe these conditions on many other forests. For example, vegetation management activities such as

harvesting within and adjacent to a Semi-Primitive ROS setting and associated road construction will increase the sights and sounds of logging equipment such as chainsaws and skidders. Scenery will be degraded, especially in areas deemed suitable for timber production resulting in scenic character that is unexpected from those areas with existing Semi-Primitive ROS settings designations. Natural settings where timber is harvested occurs and roads are constructed will be substantially modified and noticed to an observer wandering through the area. Where Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS setting characteristics are expected the Scenic Character will strongly deviate from that which would be expected from implementing the Planning Rule as described in the Rule PEIS and the 1986 ROS Book.

Consistent with the 1986 ROS Book, timber production is incompatible with achieving Semi- Primitive ROS setting desired conditions. The purpose of timber production is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut into logs, bolts, or other round sections for industrial or consumer use, which is in stark contrast and clearly incompatible with protecting the naturalness characteristics of Semi-Primitive Non- Motorized and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS classes. The lasting effects of an activity (roads, timber harvest) as well as short-term effects (logging trucks, noise) degrade Semi-Primitive ROS characteristics. In areas of timber production, the spread of non-native vegetation (e.g., noxious weeds) and reoccurring harvests for timber purposes, stand tending, permanent and temporary road construction and reconstruction, travel route closures, and other activities are incompatible with the desired Semi-Primitive ROS settings. In areas where timber harvest with road access is desired, the appropriate ROS class designation is a Roded Natural/Roded Modified setting.

Permanent and temporary roads in Semi-Primitive ROS settings must be constrained using Evidence of Humans criteria as described in the 1986 ROS Book. Rarely would permanent and temporary roads be consistent with a SPNM setting that would be expected along a National Scenic Trail. If a road was to be built for any reason, it should be decommissioned with full obliteration, recontouring, and restoring natural slopes. Monitoring must ensure that surface areas are stabilized and revegetated with native plants.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.14, 1502.15, 1502.15, 1502.16, 1508.7,

40 CFR [sect] 1502.24; 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.3, 219.10(b)(1)(i).

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 17-18. New information in the FEIS.

#### D. Affected Environment [ndash] Designated Areas

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS on page 409 states, [ldquo]Forest system trails include about 40 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.[rdquo]

The FEIS on page 457 states, [ldquo]The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is intended to provide for scenic, high-quality, primitive hiking and horseback riding experiences, while preserving the significant natural, historic, and cultural resources along the Trail.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The National Trails System Act of 1968, 82 Stat. 919, as amended, provides that the CDNST, [ldquo]shall be administered[rdquo] [ldquo]by the Secretary of Agriculture[rdquo] so located as to [ldquo]provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment[rdquo] of [ldquo]nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities.[rdquo] It empowers and requires that the Secretary of Agriculture select the CDNST rights-of-way which informs the National Scenic Trail corridor location and width. The establishment of the CDNST thus constitutes an overlay on the management regime otherwise applicable to public areas managed by land management agencies. The NTSA and E.O. 13195 - Trails for America in the 21st Century - limits the management discretion the agencies would otherwise have by mandating the delineation and protection of the CDNST rights-of-way (aka National Trail Management Corridor) for the purpose of providing for the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

The affected environment fails to describe the environment of the area to be affected by the alternatives under consideration. The affected environment section must describe the degree to which CDNST qualities and values are being protected, including the protection of desired recreation settings, scenic integrity, and providing for the conservation purposes along the existing CDNST travel route within the presumed CDNST rights-of-way corridor.

The affected environment does not describe the environment of the CDNST rights-of- way/corridor to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration. What is the degree to which current management direction is protecting the values for which each National Trail was designated, including protecting cultural landscapes, recreation settings, scenic integrity, and addressing the conservation purposes of the CDNST?

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1502.15

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 16-18. Handbook Chapter IV Part D.

#### E. Environmental Consequences [ndash] Designated Areas

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS reviews CDNST effects in Volume 2, beginning on page 99, stating, [ldquo]The most current comprehensive plans for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and national historic trails would guide management for these trails under all alternatives. Establishment

reports for national recreation trails would continue to guide management under all alternatives. The current nationally designated trails would continue to be managed to protect the values for which they were designated and provide opportunities to view natural features and scenery, recreational opportunities in a variety of ROS settings, and public use and enjoyment of historic routes and associated historic remnants resulting in opportunities for the public to connect with nature and enjoy the nature and purposes for which the trails were designated[hellip].[rdquo]

Effects common to Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 states, [ldquo]Designated area plan components include comprehensive direction for: Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, national historic trails, and national recreation trails. Desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines align management direction with the

nature and purpose of each trail and any applicable comprehensive plans and establishment reports for national recreation trails[hellip]

There is potential to impact scenic integrity as viewed from designated trails as a result of proposed vegetation management activities, particularly activities with mechanical treatments, under all alternatives. In the short term, restoration activities completed with mechanical treatments may alter scenic resources visible from the designated trails resulting in evident management activities changing forest stands from closed forests to more open forests and from residual stumps and soil disturbance<sup>NDT7</sup>. In the long term, vegetation treatments may improve scenery by creating vistas, promoting healthy vegetation and improving ecosystem resilience to uncharacteristic disturbances[hellip]

Alternative 2 [ndash] Proposed Plan describes that, [ldquo]There is potential to impact scenic integrity as viewed from designated trails as a result of proposed vegetation management activities, particularly activities with mechanical treatments, under all alternatives. In the short term, restoration activities completed with mechanical treatments may alter scenic resources visible from the designated trails resulting in evident management activities changing forest stands from closed forests to more open forests and from residual stumps and soil disturbance<sup>NDT7</sup>. In the long term, vegetation treatments may improve scenery by creating vistas, promoting healthy vegetation and improving ecosystem resilience to uncharacteristic disturbances[hellip]

Alternative 2 has objectives to accomplish vegetation treatments using both mechanical treatments and prescribed fire. Stretches of these trails lie within designated wilderness, where mechanical treatment is prohibited; no mechanical treatments are anticipated in Very High SIO areas. Vegetation management both mechanically or with prescribed fire would continue within the views of designated trails with both short term effects (<sup>NDT7</sup>) and long-term benefits (<sup>NDT4, 6, 8</sup>) to meet the High SIO in foreground views (<sup>NDT3, 4, 6</sup>). Alternative 2 has a guideline that visual impacts from management activities and infrastructure should meet scenery objectives as identified on the Scenic Integrity Objective Map. Where High SIO is assigned

beyond the foreground distance, the benefits of implementing vegetation management to meet the Scenic Integrity Objective Map would occur throughout a trail corridor viewshed[hellip]

The cumulative effects analysis timeframe is the next 10 to 15 years and the area is the Santa Fe National forest, the lands adjacent to and lands within the Santa Fe NF under other ownership within about 10 miles. National recreation trails may experience increased visitation and recreation use as populations increase, especially due to their proximity to urban areas like Santa Fe. The longer distance designated trails (Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and national historic trails) pass in and out of NFS lands and settings and landscapes may change rather abruptly from undeveloped, natural settings to developed, rural or urban settings. Since most private lands and other ownerships do not have the same regulations for natural resource management, the effects of ongoing developments or activities next to or within NFS land boundaries can sometimes be quite noticeable when viewing the continuous landscape potentially affecting the visitor[rsquo]s satisfaction and quality of their experience on a long- distance designated trail <sup>NDT9</sup>.

Comprehensive management plans for nationally designated scenic and historic trails are developed to guide management along the entire length of a trail to protect and enhance the nature and purpose for which the trail was designated including historic, scenic and recreational qualities across ownership boundaries, reducing any negative cumulative consequences (<sup>NDT9</sup>). The cumulative environmental consequences of proposed management efforts in the context of the larger cumulative effects analysis area though comprehensive management plans would contribute to the movement of designated trail values toward desired conditions[hellip].[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The proposed revised Forest Plan CDNST plan components do not provide direction that is consistent with the NTSA and the CDNST Comprehensive Plan. The Forest Service relies on vague National Trails System Act direction for selecting the CDNST rights-of-way (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(a)(2)) as an indicator that the management and protection of National Scenic and Historic Trails is subordinate to common multiple-use programs. This interpretation is inconsistent with the broad direction in the National Trails System Act. The National Trails System Act establishes National Scenic Trails (16 U. S. C. [sect] 1244(a)), including the CDNST (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1244(a)(5)). It also empowers and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the CDNST location and width by selecting the National Scenic Trail [ldquo]rights-of-way[rldquo] (16 U. S. C. [sect][sect] 1246(a)(2), 1246(d), 1246(e)). A right-of-way is a type of easement limiting or burdening use. The Secretary must protect the nature and purposes of this National Scenic Trail (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(c)), and to achieve the purposes for why the National Scenic Trail was designated, the Secretary is to provide for the [ldquo]protection, management, development, and administration[rldquo] of the National Scenic Trail (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(i)).

Similar constraints and burdens are true in related contexts, such as when the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1531 et seq., would prohibit otherwise permissible land uses in

a national forest if the activity would destroy a listed species or its critical habitat (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1536(a)(2)) or where the Wilderness Act, (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1131 et seq.) would prohibit roads, vehicles, and any commercial enterprise in a statutorily designated wilderness area within a National Forest (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1133(c)). National Scenic Trails are established as provided in section 5 of this Act and located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(a)(2)).

The revised Forest Plan CDNST plan components do not protect the qualities and values of this National Scenic Trail. The plan components do not address the National Trails System Act and CDNST Comprehensive Plan requirements to: (1) provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities that reflect ROS planning framework conventions, and (2) conserve scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(a)(2)). In addition, the plan does not establish direction to: (1) preserve significant natural, historical, and cultural resources (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1244(f)(1)); and (2) protect the CDNST corridor to the degree necessary to ensure that the values for which the CDNST was established remain intact or are restored (E.O. 13195, FSM 2353.44b(1) and FSH 1909.12 24.43). The revised plan draft decision does not avoid approving activities that are incompatible with the purposes for which the CDNST was established (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(c)).

The revised Forest Plan direction is inconsistent with the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan direction. The identification and selection of the rights-of-way (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(a)(2)) may lead to varying degrees of effects, but most often a National Scenic Trail management corridor would be the primary area for addressing the effects analysis. Effects on scenic integrity and ROS class conditions should be based on analysis of the effects of the allowable uses. Utilizing ROS and Scenery Management systems will help ensure that NEPA assessments are systematic and accurately describe the affected environment and expected outcomes from each alternative.

The FEIS does not address the expected effects of each alternative on CDNST nature and purposes values as measured through Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Scenery Management System planning frameworks, which are the accepted Best Available Science and Methodology and Scientific Accuracy analysis systems. The proposed plan and alternatives do not disclose that vegetation management practices are constrained to only those actions that do not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of National Scenic and Historic Trails.

The EIS must disclose effects of the proposed action and alternatives on scenic integrity and ROS class conditions. Utilizing the ROS and Scenery Management System will help ensure that NEPA assessments are systematic and accurately describe the affected environment and expected outcomes from each alternative. The EIS should recognize that management

direction for Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roaded Natural, Rural, and Urban ROS classes allow uses that would substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of a National Scenic Trail if the allocation desired conditions are realized. The establishment of Primitive and Semi- Primitive Non-Motorized ROS classes and high and very high scenic integrity allocations would normally protect the nature and purposes (values) of a National Scenic Trail.

In general, the Forest Service has failed to establish ROS desired conditions, standards, and guidelines to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST in any of the alternatives. Effects from the proposed action and alternatives would lead to actions that substantially degrade CDNST qualities and values.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: Comprehensive planning for the CDNST, as implemented through Santa Fe National Forest staged decisionmaking processes, is inconsistent with the NTSA, Section 5(f) and 7(c) direction as implemented through the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, E.O. 13195, and directives. The Forest Service has failed to protect the purposes for which the CDNST was established by Congress.

16 U.S.C. [sect] 1604(f)(1); 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1244(f), 1246(c); E.O. 13195; 36 CFR [sect][sect]

219.10(b)(1)(vi), 212 Subparts B and C; CDNST Comprehensive Plan [ndash] 74 FR 51116-51125; FSM 2353.44b; 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.14, 1502.24.

Connection with Comments: Santa Fe Draft Plan comments pages 16-22. Handbook Chapter IV Part E.

F. Responses to Comments [ndash] Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 beginning on page 232 states, [ldquo]FP018: In the timber suitability analysis, the statement, [ldquo]Other designated areas with management specified by the laws associated with their enactment including, national recreational trails, national scenic trails, and national historic trails were not removed from lands that may be suitable for timber production because sustainable timber harvest is not inconsistent with the law, regulation, policy, or plan direction that directs management of these lands.[rdquo] is false and should be removed from the text. Associated Comments: #11984-32. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

FP018 Response: Managing land for timber is an important part of maintaining scenic integrity in this part of the country. Furthermore, plan components for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail protect the scenic quality and associated resources of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in the event vegetation management or timber harvest is needed to meet objectives.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: This informal response (i.e., [ldquo]in this part of the county[rdquo] does not address the expressed concern. Timber production and associated roads substantial degrade CDNST qualities and values.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or



Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 321 states, [ldquo]REC032: The FEIS should include desired conditions for primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized settings that better address existing roads and ROS class inconsistencies to minimize effects to the CDNST. Associated Comments: #11984-30. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

REC032 Response: The desired ROS is based both on desired management and feasible management of an area. Areas where roads and trails will require management over time are classed appropriately to how they will be managed. It is assumed, for National Scenic, Historic, and Recreational Trails, that ROS setting will vary as it is not always possible to route trails with no motorized activity. So, while it may be desired that trails only pass through primitive or semi- primitive non-motorized, this is not realistic on the landscape and management is improved by acknowledging the actual setting the trails pass through.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The response confirms that the plan does not establish ROS settings to protect CDNST qualities and values, which will lead to actions that substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST. Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings need to be restored along segments of the CDNST on the Santa Fe National Forest.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 321 states, [ldquo]DA051: The CDNST corridor is unsuitable for timber production, as this use is incompatible with the nature and purpose of the trail and is not allowed by the NTSA. To reflect ROS principles, the CDNST corridor with an extent of one- half mile on each side should be identified unsuitable for timber production and timber harvest should only occur within the CDNST Management Area to protect CDNST values. Associated Comments: #11984-3. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA051 Response: We developed plan components in accordance with the 2012 Planning Rule, the 2015 Planning Directives, and direction from the Regional Foresters. Additionally, all plan components in the Forest Plan have been designed to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST during future proposed site-specific management activities. In areas where the CDNST

corridor overlaps lands that are suitable for timber production and other areas where harvest is allowed, timber harvest activities would be constrained by the plan components for the CDNST (e.g., DA-CDNST-G-3 and G-4). The trail is not removed from lands that may be suited for timber production because sustainable timber harvest is not inconsistent with the law, regulation, policy, or plan direction that directs management of these lands. Site-specific actions along the CDNST, such as timber harvesting, will be analyzed through NEPA outside of the land management planning process.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The plan and alternatives failed to address concerns expressed in comments. Presented plan components do not protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST, which is inconsistent with the requirements of the National Trails System Act.

The purpose of timber production is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut into logs, bolts, or other round sections for industrial or consumer use, which is in stark contrast and clearly incompatible with protecting the naturalness characteristics of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS classes. The lasting effects of an activity (roads, timber harvest) as well as short-term effects (logging trucks, noise) degrade Semi-Primitive ROS characteristics. In areas of timber

production, the spread of non-native vegetation (e.g., noxious weeds) and reoccurring harvests for timber purposes, stand tending, permanent and temporary road construction and reconstruction, travel route closures, and other activities are incompatible with the desired Semi-Primitive ROS settings. In areas where timber harvest with road access is desired, the appropriate ROS class designation is a Roaded Natural/Roaded Modified setting.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: Permanent and temporary roads in Semi-Primitive ROS settings must be constrained using Evidence of Humans criteria as described in the 1986 ROS Book. See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 beginning on page 321 states, [ldquo]DA052: The CDNST corridor for existing and high-potential route segments must be clearly described and indicate desired ROS primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized settings. Associated Comments: #11984-7. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA052 Response: Desired ROS maps are in appendix A of the Plan. The CDNST corridor will go through multiple ROS classes. The intent for the trail is to keep it in primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized ROS settings as much as possible; however, due to the fact that some areas of the forest are heavily roaded and there are private land holdings, in some places the trail may intermittently pass through more developed ROS settings. DA-CDNST-G-2 is the direction in the

Plan that describes this, while the desired conditions maintain scenic integrity in all ROS settings.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The plan and alternatives along the CDNST travel route failed to establish management direction to restore Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS class conditions where areas were previously degraded by management activities. The plan will lead to actions that further degrade CDNST qualities and values, which is inconsistent with the National Trails System Act.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 322 states, [ldquo]DA054: A CDNST management area extending at least one mile from the CDNST trail should be established along existing and high-potential route segments. The management area should include comprehensive plan components. Associated Comments: #11984-9. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA054 Response: We developed plan components using the 2012 Planning Rule, the 2015 Planning Directives, and direction from the Regional Foresters. All plan components are designed to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST trail. We have plan components that are specific to how the corridor will be managed as part of a designated areas (DA-CDNST-G-1 and G-3). DA-CDNST-S-1 also directs us to adhere to the most up to date CDNST Comprehensive Plan, which provides additional guidance. Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and policies that provide direction for the CDNST. The responsible official determined that appropriate protection and direction to provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST can be provided through designated area plan components and the mapped corridor shown (see appendix A of the final Plan).The corridor is defined and mapped as part of existing plan components. Within the section on the trail there are plan components that are specific to the trail, the corridor, or

both. Therefore, the intent of having the corridor as a management area is met with the existing set of plan components but in a way that is more streamlined in our plans. The Forest has not identified any high-potential route segments at this time. If any are identified in the future, they will be evaluated appropriately under the Forest Plan.[rdquo]

The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 beginning on page 322 states, [ldquo]should be altered to reflect the nature and purpose language in the CDNST Plan. Associated Comments: #11984-10. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA055 Response: Non-motorized activities are allowed so long as they do not interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail. Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and

policies and does not need to repeat the direction in the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan. We believe DA-CDNST-DC1 supports and complements the nature and purpose of the trail as stated in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The desired condition was developed in response to the multi- regional guidance from the Regional Foresters and describes the vision for the Santa Fe NF toward which management of the land and resources of the plan are directed.

The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 323 states, [ldquo]DA056: DA-CDNST-DC-3b conflicts with the nature and purpose of the CDNST. Associated Comments: #11984-11. Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA056 Response: We developed plan components using the 2012 Planning Rule, the 2015 Planning Directives, and direction in response to the multi-regional guidance from the Regional Forester. All plan components are designed to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST trail. Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and polices that provide direction for the CDNST.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Regional Forester direction is inconsistent with the National Forest Management Act and regulations, the National Trails System Act, and the CDNST Comprehensive Plan. The Santa Fe plan is inconsistent with the CDNST Comprehensive Plan that directs that the Plan further address the National Trails System Act requirements through staged decision-making. CDNST plan components presented in comments do not repeat, but instead clarifies laws and policies.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 323 states, [ldquo]DA057: DA-CDNST-S-1 is inconsistent with NFMA and NEPA, and must therefore be deleted. Associated Comments: #11984-12.

Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA057 Response: We do not agree that this plan component is inconsistent with the NEPA and NFMA. Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and polices that provide direction for the CDNST.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The proposed plan did not follow the existing CDNST Comprehensive Plan and use the existing best available science. The Forest Service cannot legally commit to some unknown direction in a revised CDNST Comprehensive Plan with unknown direction, while ignoring the current direction.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 323 states, [ldquo]DA058: DA-CDNST-S-2 is not consistent with the NTSA implemented through the CDNST Comprehensive Plan and policy. Associated Comments: #11984-13 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA058 Response: We developed plan components using the 2012 Planning Rule, the 2015 Planning Directives, and direction in response to the multi-regional guidance from the Regional Forester. All plan components are designed to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST trail. Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and policies that provide direction for the CDNST. DA-CDNST-S-2 is consistent with policy set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. New motorized vehicle use by the general public is prohibited on the CDNST. In general, established motorized uses, both summer and winter, are allowed to continue, but new motorized uses will not be designated on the Trail.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The proposed plan did not follow the existing CDNST Comprehensive Plan and use the existing best available science. The Forest Service cannot legally commit to some unknown direction in a revised CDNST Comprehensive Plan with unknown direction, while ignoring the current direction. See Section I Part B of this objection.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 beginning on page 323 states, [ldquo]DA059: DA-CDNST-G-1 is not relevant to CDNST management as a CDNST corridor is required through the revision process. Associated Comments: #11984-14 Changes made to Plan or EIS: Plan

DA059 Response: Santa Fe NF does not designate the CDNST corridor as a management area, but manages it as an extension of the CDNST through the designated area plan components. This guideline defines the corridor boundaries as part of the designated trail area. The responsible official determined that appropriate protection and direction to provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST can be provided through designated area plan components and a mapped corridor. The mapped corridor can be found in appendix A of the final Plan.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The CDNST corridor mapping should have considered both foreground and providing for a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS setting. The Plan must clearly describe the CDNST plan components apply to the CDNST corridor.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 324 states, [ldquo]DA061: DA-CDNST-G-3 should be changed to a

desired condition. Associated Comments: #11984-16 Changes made to Plan or EIS: Plan

DA061 Response: We added a desired condition to the Scenic Resources section of the final Plan indicating that scenic integrity objectives are considered desired conditions.

[bull] FW-SCENIC-DC-6: Scenic Integrity Objectives serve as the Desired Conditions for scenery (see Appendix A, Fig. 8-west and Fig. 8-east).

We do not agree that DA-CDNST-G-3 should be a desired condition, as it provides management constraints rather than describing a vision for the forest (see final Plan, chapter 1, Contents of the Forest Plan, Forest Plan Components).

Issue and Statement of Explanation: A management constraint would be a described Scenic Integrity Level not a SIO. However, it appears that FW-SCENIC-DC-6 addresses the issue.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 324 states, [ldquo]DA062: DA-CDNST-G-4 should be modified to read: [ldquo]If management activities that do not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST, but result in short-term impacts to the scenic character along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, mitigation measures should be included (e.g., screening, feathering, and other scenery management techniques), to minimize visual impacts at key points (e.g., vistas), within 0.5 mile either side of the trail.[rdquo] Associated Comments: #11984-17 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA062 Response: Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and polices that provide direction for the CDNST. DA- CDNST-S-1 states we will comply with the most recent version of the CDNST Comprehensive Plan. This includes the nature and purpose stated within.

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Plan direction is inconsistent with law and policy, which will result in actions like past actions that have degraded CDNST qualities and values. This is especially troubling for actions that occurred after CDNST Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2009.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 325 states, [ldquo]DA064: DA-CDNST-G-9 would be better addressed through establishing ROS settings and through public motorized use that is allowed by NTSA. Associated Comments: #11984-19 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA064 Response: Desired ROS and the CDNST corridor are both mapped in appendix A of the final Plan. DA-CDNST-G-2 also address ROS settings. DA-CDNST-G-9 is consistent with recommended direction from the consistent with the National Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Administrator and policy set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The mapped ROS classes do not protect the CDNST qualities and values from being degraded. The direction is inconsistent with the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 325 states, [ldquo]DA066: DA-CDNST-G-12 should be changed to a Standard. Associated Comments: #11984-21 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA066 Response: Activities that would substantially interfere with the purposes for which the trail was designated should be avoided to the extent practicable (16 U.S.C. 1246). Flexibility and adaptability are tenants of the 2012 Planning Rule. Thus, unless there is a specific need for the intent of a direction to be reached in a specific way, guidelines are the default type of management direction.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The NTSA requires that use shall be prohibited that substantially interferes with the CDNST nature and purposes.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 326 states, [ldquo]DA069: A supplemental EIS must be created to describe the degree to which current management direction is protecting the values for which each National Trail was designated, including protecting cultural landscapes, recreation settings, scenic integrity, and addressing the conservation purposes of the CDNST. Guidance for this supplemental analysis should be drawn from the CDNST Planning Handbook, Ch IV part D. Associated Comments: #11984-27 Changes made to Plan or EIS: EIS

DA069 Response: Under the Effects Common to All Alternatives for the Nationally Designated Trails section of the FEIS (FEIS, Vol. 2, Nationally Designated Trails, section 3.18.7.4.1.1 Effects common to all alternatives), we have made the following change to indicate that the most current guidance on the CDNST will be followed under any alternative: [ldquo]the most current comprehensive plans for the CDNST and national historic trails would guide management for these trails under all alternatives.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Plan and alternatives failed to follow the guidance in the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan, which will lead to actions that continue to degrade CDNST qualities and values.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 326 states, [ldquo]DA070: The Forest Plan fails to establish ROS plan components to protect the nature and purpose of the CDNST, and comprehensive planning for the trail is inconsistent with NTSA, Section 5(f) and 7(c) direction as implemented through the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, E.O. 13195, and directives. Associated Comments: #11984-28 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA070 Response: Plan components were developed for all designated areas, including those that protect the nature and purposes of the National Scenic and Historic Trails. All action alternatives include plan components for the CDNST and establish a CDNST corridor that extends 1/2 mile either side of the CDNST. Plan components for the CDNST provide direction within this corridor regardless of the ROS setting. Please see the CDNST section under Designated Area section of the Forest Plan. The corridor map is displayed in Appendix A of the final Plan. Analysis for the CDNST trail corridor is included in the FEIS. Desired ROS is mapped in

Appendix A of the final Plan, indicated by FW-REC-G-7. DA-CDNST-G-2 and the Recreation section of the final Plan also address ROS settings.

Forest Plan direction is in addition to law, regulations, and policies. The Forest Service must follow all laws, regulations, and polices that provide direction for the CDNST. All future site- specific project analysis will consider the CDNST trail and the CDNST corridor as displayed in the final Plan and will need to follow the associated plan components, and all laws, regulations, and policies for the CDNST. E.O. 13195: Federal agencies will, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable and in cooperation with Tribes, States, local governments, and interested citizen groups, protect, connect, promote, and assist trails of all types throughout the United States. This will be accomplished by: (b) Protecting the trail corridors associated with national scenic trails and the high priority potential sites and segments of national historic trails to the degrees necessary to ensure that the values for which each trail was established remain intact.

Additionally, DA-CDNST-S-1 states that management of the CDNST must comply with the current CDNST Comprehensive Plan.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Plan and alternatives failed to follow the guidance in the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan, which will lead to actions that continue to degrade CDNST qualities and values. Furthermore, the Plan and alternatives failed to establish ROS classes that provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

The Plan direction is inconsistent with law and policy, which will result in actions like past actions that have degraded CDNST qualities and values. This is especially troubling for actions that occurred after CDNST Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2009.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 327 states, [ldquo]DA071: The DEIS does not address the expected effects of resource management under each alternative on CDNST nature and purposes values as measured through the ROS planning framework, and must disclose effects on scenic integrity, ROS class conditions, and carrying capacities. A Supplemental DEIS effects analysis must include cross-tabular tables that explore and disclose the relationship between (1) the proposed CDNST travel route location and management corridor/rights-of-way extent and

(2) the intersection and overlap with the proposed ROS Classes and Scenic Integrity Objectives allocations. Utilizing the ROS and Scenery Management System will help ensure that NEPA assessments are systematic and accurately describe the affected environment and expected outcomes from each alternative. Associated Comments: #11984-31 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA071 Response: The plan revision process does not designate new segments of the trail, but directs management of existing trail segments. The FEIS analyzes the effects of our proposed management on the trail under each alternative in section 3.18.7, Nationally Designated Trails. The type of analysis being asked for in the comment is more appropriate for a site-specific trail delineation or re-route, rather than for a programmatic management analysis.

Plan components in the Forest Plan have been designed to protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST during future proposed site-specific management activities. Regardless of the recreation opportunity setting that designated trails pass through they are managed according to the National Scenic, Historic, and Recreation

Trails section of the final Plan, including DA- NTRL-DC-1 which directs management to protect the nature and purposes of trail designations.

In the final Plan, DA-NTRL-DC-8 reflects the desire that the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail passes mainly through primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized settings. This is the case on the Santa Fe NF to the extent possible.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Plan and alternatives failed to follow the guidance in the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan, which will lead to actions that continue to degrade CDNST qualities and values. Furthermore, the Plan and alternatives failed to establish ROS classes that provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST. Effects on the CDNST qualities and values were not disclosed in the FEIS.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 330 states, [ldquo]DA081: The CDNST should be considered for its importance as a wildlife corridor and for habitat connectivity. Recognition of the trail and trail corridor's role in aquatic and terrestrial habitat connectivity should be incorporated and at least acknowledged in the Designated Area Standards, Guidelines and Management Approaches. Associated Comments: #12513-12 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA081 Response: The CDNST may provide habitat connectivity for wildlife species; however, this is not the purpose of the CDNST. Management Direction found in the CDNST Designated Resource Section is to provide management direction for the purpose of the CDNST designation. The final Plan includes many plan components that are designed improve wildlife habitat connectivity, which could be applied to the CDNST. Plan components related to habitat connectivity are indicated in Appendix E, section C, of the FEIS.

See also: WILD001/022/052 for more on how the final Plan supports habitat connectivity across the forest.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: There are several conservation purposes described for the CDNST corridor, including conserving natural resources. The National Trails System Act conservation and preservation purposes are stated in 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1246(k), 1244(f)(3), 1246(i), 1241(a), and 1244(f)(1).

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection. Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3) Connection with Comments: New information.

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 on page 332 states, [ldquo]DA367: The CDNST corridor is unsuitable for timber production, as this use is incompatible with the nature and purpose of the trail. To reflect ROS principles, the CDNST corridor with an extent of one-half mile on each side should be

identified unsuitable for timber production and timber harvest should only occur within the CDNST Management Area to protect CDNST values. Associated Comments: #11984-2 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

DA367 Response: Timber suitability does not have to do with location or distance from roads, nor does it necessarily mean there will be a timber harvest on the land. Rather, suitability has to do with soils and how lands are designated (see FEIS Vol. 2, appendix D). FW-FFP-S-1, 2, and 8 defines how resources will be protected during harvests. Wild and scenic rivers with scenic and recreation are considered suited, as there are nothing in



scenic or recreational classifications that are against timber suitability, but primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized ROS are not suited to timber production (see FEIS Vol. 2, appendix D, Table 27).

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The declaration is not factual that, [ldquo]Other designated areas with management specified by the laws associated with their enactment including, national recreational trails, national scenic trails, and national historic trails were not removed from lands that may be suitable for timber production because sustainable timber harvest is not inconsistent with the law, regulation, policy, or plan direction that directs management of these lands[rldquo] and must be discarded.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail: Timber production is incompatible with achieving National Trails System Act objectives and the CDNST nature and purposes desired conditions. The purpose of timber production is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut into logs, bolts, or other round sections for industrial or consumer use, which is in stark contrast and clearly incompatible with protecting the purposes for which National Trails are established. The CDNST rights-of-way/management corridor is not suitable for timber production (36 CFR 219.11(a)(1)(i) and (iii)).

The NTSA, Section 2(a), policy describes an objective as, [ldquo][hellip]to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation[hellip].[rdquo] Section 3(a)(2), states that, [ldquo]national scenic trails[hellip]will be[hellip]located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.[rdquo] Section 5(f), describes that a comprehensive plan, which is being completed through staged decision making on NFS lands, will provide management direction that addresses, [ldquo]specific objectives and practices to be observed in the management of the trail, including the identification of all significant natural, historical, and cultural resources to be preserved[hellip], and a protection plan for any[hellip]high potential route segments.[rdquo] Section 7(c) restricts uses and activities, including the removal of vegetation describing that, [ldquo]Other uses along the trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, may be permitted.[rdquo]

The CDNST Comprehensive Plan and FSM 2353.42 policy describes desired conditions, [ldquo]Administer National Scenic and National Historic Trail corridors to be compatible with the nature and purposes of the corresponding trail... The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor.[rdquo]

The lasting effects of an activity (roads, timber harvest) as well as short-term effects (logging trucks, noise) degrade CDNST values. Managing the CDNST corridor for Roaded Natural/Modified and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS settings and timber production purposes would lead to management actions that substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST. In areas of timber production, reoccurring harvests for timber purposes, stand tending, road construction and reconstruction, CDNST travel route closures, and other activities are incompatible with desired ROS settings and Scenic Integrity Objectives.

The Plan should recognize that timber production and associated actions and activities are inconsistent with the provisions of (1) the National Trails System Act, including providing for the nature and purposes of the CDNST and (2) Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS classes, which are appropriate ROS allocations for a CDNST management corridor or rights-of- way. Regulated forest structure conditions maintained by periodic forest harvest and regeneration is inconsistent with and unnecessary for achieving CDNST, Primitive ROS class, and Semi-Primitive ROS class desired conditions; these areas must not be classified as suitable for timber production, and harvest quantity projections must not be included in projected wood sale quantity and projected

timber sale quantity calculations.

Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers: The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protects the vestiges of primitive America along Wild River areas, shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped along Scenic River Areas, and there may be some development along the shorelines of Recreational River Segments. Regardless of classification, each river in the National System is administered with the goal of protecting and enhancing the values that caused it to be designated.

Timber production does not protect ORVs of Scenic and Recreational Rivers. The only timber harvest to occur along eligible Scenic and Recreational Rivers is for resource benefit. A range of vegetation management and timber harvest practices may be allowed along Scenic River areas and Recreational River areas, if these practices are designed to protect users, or protect, restore, or enhance the river environment, including the long-term scenic character. Eligible Scenic Rivers and Recreational Rivers are not suitable for timber production (36 CFR 219.11(a)(1)(i) and (iii)).

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Connection with Comments: New information. Comments page 18.

G. Responses to Comments [ndash] Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Settings

FEIS: The Santa Fe FEIS Volume 4 beginning on page 230 states, [ldquo]FP011: The determination of which lands are suitable for timber production was questioned. These include: (1) slopes in excess of 20 percent, (2) lands farther than 1,000 feet from MVUM roads, (3) lands with Primitive or Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings, and (4) lands along eligible WSRs with Scenic or Recreational classifications. Associated Comments: #67-1 (a), #11984-2 Changes made to Plan or EIS: None

FP011 Response: Timber suitability does not have to do with location or distance from roads, nor does it necessarily mean there will be a timber harvest on the land. Rather, suitability has to do with soils and how lands are designated (see EIS Vol 2, Appendix C). Slope was considered as part of the timber suitability analysis (EIS Vol2, Appendix C, Table C-1), and FW-FORESTRY-S-1b- d defines how resources will be protected during harvests. WSR with scenic and recreation are considered suited, as there is nothing in scenic or recreational classifications that is against timber suitability, but Primitive and SPNM ROS are not suited to timber production (EIS Vol 2 Table C-3). Other related guidance includes FW-ROADS-G-8, which guides project managers to decommission roads after they are built for resource management purposes, such as harvests.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Timber production is inconsistent with Primitive, Semi- Primitive Non-Motorized, and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS classes desired conditions as described in the 1986 ROS Book.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) Parts (1)-(3)

Summary Finding: The FEIS responses to public comments often rely on CDNST direction found in correspondence from the Regional Forester. The FEIS should have described that the, [ldquo]Recommended Forest Plan Components approved in August 2016, by the regional foresters of the four Forest Service regions the trail passes through was eliminated from detailed study since the direction does not provide for the nature and purposes qualities and values of the CDNST.[rdquo] Planning and management guidance enacted through Regional Forester or other correspondence may supplement, but does not supersede the guidance found in the

National Trails System Act, Executive Orders, CDNST Comprehensive Plan, regulations, and directives.

The Regional Foresters's formulation and adoption of this guidance was not in compliance with section 14(a) of the FRRRPA (16 U.S.C. 1612(a)) and 36 CFR 216 processes.

The regional plan components do not protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST from developments and other incompatible uses such as timber production and road construction. The regional plan components do not address the National Trails System Act requirements to:

(1) provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities, and (2) conserve scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass (16 U.S.C. 1242(a)(2)). In addition, the regional plan guidance does not establish direction to: (1) preserve significant natural, historical, and cultural resources (16 U.S.C. 1244(f)(1)); and (4) protect the CDNST corridor to the degree necessary to ensure that the values for which the CDNST was established remain intact (E.O. 13195, FSM 2353.44b(1), and FSH 1909.12 24.43.) The revised plan draft decision does not avoid approving activities that are incompatible with the purposes for which the CDNST was established (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(c)).

The FEIS should have recognized that management direction for Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roaded Natural, Rural, and Urban ROS classes allow uses that would substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of a National Scenic Trail if the allocation desired conditions are realized. The establishment of Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS classes and high and very high scenic integrity allocations would normally protect the nature and purposes qualities and values of a National Scenic Trail.

The Regional Foresters's plan components do not protect CDNST qualities and values consistent with the National Trails System Act as implemented through the Comprehensive Plan, Executive Order, and directives. It is likely that reasonably foreseeable future actions for vegetation and fuels treatments will substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST being inconsistent with the provisions of the National Trails System Act and the NFMA requirement for integrated planning. Degradation of the CDNST could be avoided if the final revised Southwestern Region Forest Plans are modified to address legal, regulatory, and policy requirements as described in these comments and the comments submitted on the Carson, Santa Fe, and Cibola Draft Plans and DEISs.

#### Section V. Statement of Issues Draft ROD

The following are statements of the issues to which the objection applies and concise statements explaining the objection and suggestions on how the proposed decision may be improved.

##### A. Rationale for the Decision [ndash] Recreation

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD beginning on page 27 states, [ldquo]Comments on the DEIS, along with new information and additional analyses, resulted in moderate updates to the EIS and Plan[hellip] A detailed accounting of changes is recorded in the project record; excluding minor editorial changes, clarifications, and typographical errors, modifications are summarized here:

[middot] Clarified the use of desired recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) and scenery integrity objectives (SIO) to address confusion regarding the draft plan. Changes include adding desired conditions referencing the desired ROS and SIO maps in appendix A of the Plan and changing all mention of [ldquo]ROS[rdquo] to [ldquo]desired ROS.

[middot] Added a map of the [frac12] mile Continental Divide Scenic Trail corridor to appendix A.

[middot] Recommended the same wilderness and eligible wild and scenic rivers as the draft plan, but corrected miles of designated wild and scenic rivers and corrected ROS setting standards for eligible wild and scenic rivers.

[middot] Clarified standards regarding mechanized and motorized use within recommended wilderness management areas.[rdquo]

[middot] Added definitions to the glossary for canopy cover, catastrophic fire, national trail, ROS, riparian management zones, soil and water conservation districts, traditional knowledge, and user conflict.

[middot] Five plan components were added [ndash] Two to comply with existing regional direction, one based on public comments, and two to respond to both public comment and emerging regional direction.

- o FW-REC-DC-7: Desired ROS settings serve as the desired conditions for recreation (see Appendix A, Fig. 9-west and Fig. 9-east). -- Added based on public comments and regulations that we need to indicate that desired ROS is a desired condition. Also based on discussions among the three northern New Mexico forests and the Region 3 Regional Office to ensure that it is clear that desired ROS maps are not plan components and can be changed administratively.

- o FW-SCENIC-DC-6: Scenic Integrity Objectives serve as the desired conditions for scenery (see Appendix A, Fig. 8-west and Fig. 8-east). -- Added based on public comments and regulations that we need to indicate that desired SIO is a desired condition. Also based on discussions among the three northern New Mexico forests and the Region 3 Regional Office to ensure that it is clear that desired SIO maps are not plan components and can be changed administratively.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: A Forest Plan provides for opportunities for specific recreation activities in defined recreation settings. Recreation settings include the social, managerial, and physical attributes of a place that, when combined, provide a distinct set of recreation opportunities. The Forest Service uses the recreation opportunity spectrum to define recreation settings and categorizes them into six distinct classes. The Forest Service uses the 1986 ROS Book in developing Forest Plans. The revised plan must include plan components to provide for sustainable recreation; including recreation settings, opportunities, and access; and scenic character. The revised plan must include desired conditions for sustainable recreation using mapped desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes. The plan should include specific standards or guidelines where restrictions are needed to ensure the achievement or movement toward the desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes. Restrictions are needed in Primitive and Semi-Primitive ROS settings to ensure that desired conditions are realized. The 1986 ROS Book describes desired conditions for each ROS setting or class. For example, a SPNM

setting is a natural setting that may have subtle modifications that would be noticed but not draw the attention of an observer wandering through the area.

The Santa Fe Plan definitions of ROS setting plan components do not include ROS class descriptions that address Evidence of Humans desired conditions. For example, the SPNM ROS setting no longer describes that, [ldquo]Natural setting may have subtle modifications that would be noticed, but not draw the attention of an observer wandering through the area.[rdquo] The FEIS fails to disclose the competing nature of the desire to maintain a natural setting with little evidence of management with the negative effects of mechanical treatment of vegetation and associated permanent and temporary roads.

[ldquo]The recreation opportunity spectrum has been an effective land management planning tool since 1982. The recreation opportunity spectrum is a framework for identifying, classifying, planning, and managing a range

of recreation settings. The setting, activity, and opportunity for obtaining experience are arranged along a spectrum of classes from primitive to urban. In each setting, a range of activities is accommodated. For example, primitive settings accommodate primarily non-motorized uses, such as backpacking and hiking; whereas roaded settings (such as roaded natural) or rural settings accommodate motorized uses, such as driving for scenery or access for hunting. Through this framework, planners compare the relative tradeoffs of how different patterns of settings across the landscape would accommodate (or not accommodate) recreational preferences, opportunities, and impacts (programmatic indirect environmental effects) with other multiple uses[rdquo] (Planning Rule PEIS, page 209).

Established Scenic Integrity Objective and ROS setting desired conditions may constrain management actions. Under the 2012 Rule, [ldquo]plan components[rdquo] are the decisions made in a forest plan that are enforceable. They are enforceable because the Planning Rule requires all future management actions to be [ldquo]consistent with the applicable plan components.[rdquo] Desired conditions are the basis for the rest of the plan components; objectives, standards, guidelines, and suitability determinations must be developed to help achieve the desired conditions.

ROS settings is an appropriate and efficient management tool to provide for integrated resource management where compatible multiple use benefits accrue in an established ROS setting. However, Primitive and Semi-Primitive ROS classes will constrain some management actions such as mechanical treatments of vegetation that utilize heavy equipment and permanent or temporary roads if these desired ROS class opportunities as described in the 1986 ROS Book are to be protected.

The APA ensures that agencies do not change course based on the [ldquo]whim and caprice of the bureaucracy,[rdquo] and prevents agencies from subverting the rule of law by making policy based on shifting [ldquo]political winds and currents.[rdquo] When reversing a prior policy that [ldquo]has engendered serious reliance interests,[rdquo] the agency must [ldquo]provide a more detailed justification than what

would suffice for a new policy created on a blank slate.[rdquo] This requires a [ldquo]reasoned explanation[hellip] for disregarding the facts and circumstances that underlay or were engendered by the prior policy.[rdquo]

The Forest Service did not provide a reasoned basis or a detailed justification for modifying the 1982 ROS User Guide and 1986 ROS Book Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting definitions and disclosing the consequences of those changes to recreationists seeking Primitive and Semi- Primitive ROS settings, including those seeking high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding experiences along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

The Planning Rule requires [ldquo]plan components for sustainable recreation, including recreation settings, opportunities, access; and scenic character[hellip][rdquo] and that [ldquo]plan components guide future project and activity decisionmaking. The plan must indicate whether specific plan components apply to the entire plan area, to specific management areas or geographic areas, or to other areas as identified in the plan[rdquo] (36 CFR [sect] 219.7 Part (e)). Knowing where ROS and Scenic Character (and SIO) plan components apply is essential to developing an integrated Forest Plan. Modifying where the ROS and Scenic Character (and SIO) direction applies must follow amendment processes and not be addressed as an administrative change. A plan amendment is required to add, modify, or remove one or more plan components, or to change how or where one or more plan components apply to all or part of the plan area.

Making choices between competing resource priorities is often the nature of integrated resource management planning as required by the National Forest Management Act (16 CFR [sect] 1604(f)(1), 36 CFR [sect] 219.10(a), FSH 1909.12 Part 22). The ROD decision must make choices between competing resources, including

establishing desired ROS settings to accurately reflect integrated resource decisions for each ROS class mapped area.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: USDA DR 1074-001; 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1612(a); 36 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 216, 219.3, 219.7, 219.10(b)(1)(i), 219.11(a)(1)(iii); 40 CFR [sect] 1502.24.

#### B. Alternatives Considered

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD beginning on page 30 states, [ldquo]I considered 3 other alternatives; these are discussed below. Alternative 2 was the environmentally preferred alternative. All reasonable alternatives to the proposed action must meet the purpose and need for change and address one or more significant issues. I identified those alternatives that met both the purpose and need for change and created a reasonable range of outputs, costs, management requirements, and effects from which to choose[hellip]

All alternatives considered in the final EIS adhere to the principles of multiple use and the sustained yield of goods and services required by the Multiple-Use and Sustained-Yield Act as described at 36 CFR 219.1 (b))[hellip].[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The CDNST plan components presented in Draft Plan and DEIS comments should have been rigorously explored and objectively evaluated, since the submitted proposed alternative/modified plan components is a reasonable approach to protecting the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

Response to comments requires the agency to assess and consider comments both individually and collectively, and shall respond by modifying alternatives including the proposed action or develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency to address substantive concerns. Preferably, as described in Section I of this objection, alternatives would have been modified to (1) establish a CDNST management corridor with supportive plan components and (2) supplemented ROS definitions to reflect the guidance in the 1986 ROS Book. Otherwise, these proposed changes that were not previously given serious consideration should have been addressed in a new alternative.

Past travel management resource plan and decisions should not have constrained FEIS alternatives. Establishing the CDNST corridor with supporting plan components will likely require the revision of summer and winter travel plans.

NEPA requires agencies to consider a reasonable range of alternatives. Agencies must, to the fullest extent possible, include [ldquo]reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment[rdquo] (40 C.F.R.

[sect] 1500.2(e)). The EIS must also state how the alternatives considered will meet both NEPA and other environmental laws and policies, including the National Trails System Act, and must discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives from detailed study (40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.2(d), 1502.14(a)).

The Forest Service did not consider a reasonable range of alternatives in the FEIS because the Forest Service failed to consider an alternative or alternatives that had the potential to reduce the adverse effects on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and better protect the purposes for which this National Scenic Trail was established.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: Prepare a Supplemental EIS. See Section I Part C of this objection

for a proposed solution for improving the decision.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1244(f), 1246(c); E.O. 13195; 42 U.S.C. [sect] 4332(2)(C); 40 C.F.R. [sect][sect] 1502.1, 1502.14, 1502.16, 1503.4(a), 1508.7; 36 CFR [sect] 219.3;

USDA DR 1074-001.

#### C. Best Available Scientific Information

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD on page 35 states, [ldquo]The 2012 Planning Rule ([sect]219.6(a)(3) and 219.14(a)(4)) requires the responsible official to document how the best available scientific information (BASI) was used to inform the assessment, the plan decision, and the monitoring program. Such documentation must identify what information was determined to be the best available scientific information, explain the basis for that determination, and explain how the information was applied to the issues considered.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Best available scientific information analyses would have required using ROS plan components that were consistent with the 1986 ROS Book, which the plan did not use in its formulation.

The Plan definition of the ROS Class desired conditions must include ROS Class characteristics descriptors that address, [ldquo]Evidence of Humans,[rdquo] [ldquo]Non-Recreation Uses,[rdquo] and [ldquo]Naturalness[rdquo] characteristics, and to make other changes that support providing for the integration of the recreation resource in natural resources planning processes.

Sustainable Recreation Planning direction must be consistent with the 1986 ROS Book and related research, which informed the Planning Rule. Forest Service directives (and policy by correspondence) must be consistent with the USDA Departmental Regulation 1074-001 scientific integrity policy that relates to the development, analysis, and use of data for decision- making. This DR is intended to instill public confidence in USDA research and science-based public policymaking by articulating the principles of scientific integrity, including reflecting scientific information appropriately and accurately.

Modifying ROS characterizations to facilitate development of unroaded areas without demonstrating a clear basis for deviating from the 1986 ROS Book is unreasonable, arbitrary, and capricious and is inconsistent with the MUSYA, NFMA, and NEPA.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C and Section III Part A of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: USDA DR 1074-001, 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1612(a), 36 U.S.C. [sect] 216, 36 CFR [sect] 219.3, 40 CFR [sect] 1502.24, Planning Rule PEIS.

#### D. Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD on page 45 states, [ldquo]The Forest Service manages National Forest System lands to sustain the multiple use of its renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long-term health and productivity of the land[hellip].[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The structure of the Planning Regulations and Directives provide for the integration of statutorily designated areas as a multiple use component. CDNST and ROS plan components are not integrated, written clearly, concisely, and without ambiguity.

Alternatives in the FEIS do not protect CDNST nature and purposes qualities and values with supporting plan

components failing to produce an integrated plan. Due to this lack of integration of protecting the CDNST for the purposes for which it was established, it is not reasoned to declare that the plan is fully compliant with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act.

The characterizations of ROS classes in most cases are a significant deviation from established Physical Setting descriptions. [ldquo]Evidence of Humans,[rdquo] [ldquo]Non-Recreation Uses,[rdquo] and [ldquo]Naturalness[rdquo] setting indicators are improperly omitted in the narratives for Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non- Motorized, and Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS settings. The proposed ROS plan components must be consistent with the 1986 ROS Book, which supported the planning rule as informed by the PEIS.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.3, 219.10(a), 219.10(b)(1)(i), 219.10(b)(1)(vi); 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1604(f)(1); 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.14, 1502.24; Planning Rule PEIS.

E. National Environmental Policy Act

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD on page 45 states, [ldquo]The Forest Service has developed, gathered, and reviewed an extensive amount of information regarding the potential effects of each of the alternatives considered in the FEIS. This information expands and refines the data, analyses, and public input described in the NEPA documents associated with the draft plan and DEIS[hellip][rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Specific to CEQ NEPA requirements, the ROD cannot attest to meeting the requirements of 40 CFR 1502.24 Methodology and Scientific Accuracy.

The FEIS did not use the 1982/1986 ROS planning framework to establish ROS settings to provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST. Definitions of ROS Classes desired conditions must include ROS Class Characteristics descriptors that address, [ldquo]Evidence of Humans,[rdquo] [ldquo]Non-Recreation Uses,[rdquo] and [ldquo]Naturalness[rdquo] characteristics, and to make other changes that support providing for the integration of the recreation resource in natural resources planning processes.

Sustainable Recreation plan components must be consistent with the 1986 ROS Book guidance and related research, which informed the Planning Rule. Forest Service directives must be consistent with the USDA Departmental Regulation 1074-001 scientific integrity policy that relates to the development, analysis, and use of data for decision-making.

NEPA requires that the responsible official make a reasoned decision, which must be dependent on clear methodologies and scientific information. To informed decision-making and informed public participation the plan direction must follow accepted methodology and scientific processes, use common definitions, and use plain writing to establish and present the

Plan direction. The CDNST plan components presented in the Plan and referred to in the FEIS do not meet these NEPA standards.

A NEPA document must contain sufficient information to foster informed decisionmaking and informed public participation. Otherwise, the decision would not be in conformance with 42

U.S.C. [sect] 4332(2)(C) and would therefore not be in accordance with law under 5 U.S.C. [sect] 706(2)(A) and not in be in observance of procedure required by law under 5 U.S.C. [sect] 706(2)(D).

For the reasons laid out in this objection, it is not reasoned to conclude that the, [ldquo]environmental analysis



and public involvement process that the environmental impact statement is based on complies with each of the major elements of the requirements set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500-1508).[rdquo]

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: USDA DR 1074-001; 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1612(a); 36 U.S.C. [sect] 216, 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.14, 1502.24; Planning Rule PEIS.

#### F. National Forest Management Act

Draft ROD: The Santa Fe DROD on page 46 states, [ldquo]The National Forest Management Act requires the development, maintenance, amendment, and revision of land management plans for each unit of the National Forest System. These land management plans help to create a dynamic management system, so that an interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences will be applied to all future actions on the unit[hellip].[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The DROD did not address and could not factually describe that management area direction in the land management plan provides protection for the nature and purposes for which the CDNST was established. The plan direction does not provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of this National Scenic Trail.

The Plan did not use the ROS planning framework to establish ROS settings to provide for the nature and purposes of the CDNST. The Plan ROS class descriptions do not include ROS Class characteristics that describe, [ldquo]Evidence of Humans,[rdquo] [ldquo]Non-Recreation Uses,[rdquo] and [ldquo]Naturalness[rdquo] characteristics, and to make other changes that support providing for the integration of the recreation resource in natural resources planning processes.

Forest Plan sustainable recreation direction must be consistent with the 1986 ROS Book and related research, which informed the Planning Rule. Forest Service sustainable recreation direction must be consistent with the USDA Departmental Regulation 1074-001 scientific integrity policy that relates to the development, analysis, and use of data for decision-making.

The ROD should state, [ldquo]The CDNST management corridor is not suited for timber production. Areas recommended for wilderness, wilderness study areas, eligible or suitable river segments are not suitable for timber production to maintain their qualities and values should designation eventually occur. The remaining lands after subtracting the lands that are suited from the lands that may be suited are not suited for timber production because it is not compatible with the land area[rsquo]s desired conditions and objectives (36 CFR 219.11(a)(1)(iii)).[rdquo]

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: USDA DR 1074-001, 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.7, 219.10(a), 219.10(b)(1)(i), 219.10(b)(1)(vi); 40 CFR [sect] 1502.24.

#### G. Travel Management Rule

Draft ROD: The Draft ROD on page 47 states, [ldquo]Prior to this plan revision, the Forest designated specific roads, areas, and trails for the use of motor vehicles (which includes off-road vehicles) that are displayed on the motorized vehicle use maps required by 36 CFR 212 subpart B. This programmatic plan decision does not authorize additional motor vehicle use or prohibit existing motor vehicles uses, therefore those maps remain unchanged. Therefore, I find that this Plan is in compliance with the Travel Management Rule.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and CDNST plan components are described in a manner that ensures that existing travel management plan decisions are consistent with the revised plan even when those previous decisions are inconsistent with the ROS class. The extent of allowing for motor vehicle use inconsistencies was not reviewed in the FEIS affected environment and environmental consequences discussions and should not be considered for allowing as a setting inconsistency without first considering the effects on the desired ROS setting.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: Do not provide for unfettered existing motor vehicle use in Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings.

Do not find that the land management plan is in compliance with the Travel Management Rule where motor vehicle use is approved in Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS settings. Do not find that the land management plan is in compliance with the Travel Management Rule where motor vehicle use is approved within the corridor of existing and high potential route segments of the CDNST.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 36 CFR [sect] 212.55; 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1244(f), 1246(c); 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.10(b)(1)(i), 219.10(b)(1)(vi); 40 CFR [sect] 1502.14, 1502.15, 1502.16; E.O. 13195; CDNST

Comprehensive Plan Chapter IV.B.6.

#### H. National Trails System Act

Draft ROD: The Draft Santa Fe ROD on pages 4 and 12 states, [ldquo]Four of New Mexico[rsquo]s eight national scenic byways traverse the Santa Fe NF, as well as the Continental Divide Trail, one of the Nation[rsquo]s 11 national scenic trails[hellip] By this decision, I approve the following: [hellip] Plan components that apply to designated areas, including: [hellip] Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.[rdquo]

The Draft Santa Fe ROD does not review the National Trails System Act. The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended, provides that the CDNST, [ldquo]shall be administered[rdquo] [ldquo]by the Secretary of Agriculture[rdquo] to be so located to [ldquo]provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment[rdquo] of [ldquo]nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities.[rdquo] In general, [ldquo]The use of motorized vehicles by the general public along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited.[rdquo] The Act empowers and requires that the Secretary of Agriculture select the CDNST rights-of-way which informs the National Scenic Trail corridor location and width. The establishment of the CDNST thus constitutes an overlay on the management regime otherwise applicable to public areas managed by land management agencies.

Issue and Statement of Explanation: The Record of Decision must address providing for the integrated management of statutorily designated areas. Statutorily designated areas must be managed to achieve the purposes for which they were established. The draft ROD decision is not based on a reasonably thorough discussion of...significant aspects of the probable environmental consequences on CDNST nature and purposes. The ROD is not in compliance with the requirement of 40 CFR 1505.2(b), since the draft ROD did not identify and discuss all such factors including the protection of National Scenic and Historic Trail qualities and values.

The National Trails System Act establishes National Scenic Trails (16 U. S. C. [sect] 1244(a)), including the CDNST (16 U. S. C. [sect] 1244(a)(5)). It empowers and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the CDNST location and width by selecting the National Scenic Trail [ldquo]rights-of-way[rdquo] (16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1246(a)(2), 1246(d), 1246(e)). The revised plan should clearly establish a CDNST Management Area (aka National Trail Management Corridor) with an extent of at least one-half mile on both sides of the CDNST travel route and along high-potential route

The draft ROD decision is not based on a reasonably thorough discussion of...significant aspects of the probable environmental consequences on CDNST nature and purposes. The ROD is not in compliance with the requirement of 40 CFR 1505.2(b), since the draft ROD did not identify and discuss all such factors including the protection of National Scenic and Historic Trail qualities and values.

The draft ROD decision is not based on a reasonably thorough discussion of...significant aspects of the probable environmental consequences on CDNST nature and purposes. The ROD is not

in compliance with the requirement of 40 CFR 1505.2(b), since the draft ROD did not identify and discuss all such factors including the protection of National Scenic and Historic Trail qualities and values.

The NTSA establishment and designation of the CDNST provides for the Secretary of Agriculture to manage the CDNST under existing agencies authorities, but subject to the overriding direction of providing for the nature and purposes of this National Scenic Trail. The establishment of the CDNST thus constitutes an overlay on the management regime otherwise applicable to public areas managed by land management agencies. The NTSA and E.O. limits the management discretion the agencies would otherwise have by mandating the delineation and protection of the CDNST corridor. The draft decision fails to act on addressing the requirements of the National Trails System Act to approve plan components that protect the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

For the purpose of addressing CDNST issues and concerns, the FEIS does not contain sufficient accurate information to foster informed decision-making or informed public participation. A Supplemental FEIS should be prepared to address the requirements of the CEQ NEPA regulations as found in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 (2005). Land use planning associated NEPA must (1) rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and (2) take a hard look at the effects of the alternatives. A Supplemental FEIS must also address whether proposed activities and use substantially interferes with the nature and purposes of the CDNST, which did not occur in the FEIS that supports the draft ROD.

The draft ROD did not and could not factually describe how the plan provides for the nature and purposes of the CDNST through established plan components that reflect the nature and purposes as a desired condition with supporting scenery, recreation, and conservation considerations addressed as standards and guidelines. The plan encourages activities and use that if implemented will degrade CDNST qualities and values and substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of this National Scenic Trail which is not allowed by the National Trails System Act.

Much of the Santa Fe CDNST plan direction departs from the CDNST Comprehensive Plan, FSH 2353.44b, and FSH 1909.12 24.43 guidance without providing a reasoned basis or a detailed justification for ignoring these previous findings and direction. The APA ensures that agencies do not change course based on the [ldquo]whim and caprice of the bureaucracy,[rdquo] and prevents agencies from subverting the rule of law by making policy based on shifting [ldquo]political winds and currents.[rdquo] When reversing a prior policy that [ldquo]has engendered serious reliance interests,[rdquo] the agency must [ldquo]provide a more detailed justification than what would suffice for a new policy created on a blank slate.[rdquo] This requires a [ldquo]reasoned explanation[hellip] for disregarding the facts and circumstances that underlay or were engendered by the prior policy.[rdquo]

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: See Section I Part C of this objection.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1604(f)(1); 16 U.S.C. [sect][sect] 1242(a)(2), 1244(f), 1246(c); E.O. 13195; 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.10(b)(1)(vi), 212 Subparts B and C; CDNST Comprehensive Plan [ndash] 74 FR 51116-51125; FSM 2353.44b; 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.14, 1502.24.

#### I. Plan Implementation

Draft ROD: The Draft ROD beginning on page 48 states, [ldquo]Any substantive changes to plan components require a plan amendment, with appropriate analysis as required under the NEPA. Administrative changes can be made without documentation of environmental effects, such as updates to data and maps, management approaches, and relevant background information; fixing typographical errors; or updating other required or optional content of a plan (content other than plan components). The public will need to be notified of all administrative changes to the Plan.

Plans may have other content, such as background, collaboration strategies, context, existing conditions, glossary, introduction, monitoring questions, other referenced information or guidance, performance history, performance measures, performance risks, program emphasis, program guidance, program priorities, possible actions, roles and contributions, management challenges, or strategies, but such other content are not matters for which project consistency is required.[rdquo]

Issue and Statement of Explanation: Statements in this section of the Draft ROD and in the Plan suggest that plan components and where the components apply may be inappropriately changed following administrative change steps instead of following plan amendment processes. Changes in glossary definitions could fundamentally alter a desired condition, standard, or guideline.

Proposed Solution to Improve the Decision: The Sant Fe FEIS ROD should discard the language quoted above. Clearly state that ROS and Scenery related Forest Plan maps will only be changed following amendment processes. In addition, changes to definitions that change a standard or guideline must follow amendment processes.

Violation of Law, Regulation or Policy: 36 CFR [sect][sect] 219.7, 219.13, 219.17(b)(2).

#### Section VI. CDNST Regulatory Planning Framework

The planning and management of National Scenic Trails is addressed by many interrelated laws, regulations, and policies. The following summarizes regulatory framework provisions that are important to Forest Plan decisions and the CDNST designated area:

[middot] USDA DR 1074-001 [ndash] Scientific Integrity in policymaking that relates to the development, analysis, and use of data for decision-making.

[middot] 36 CFR [sect] 216 (16 U.S.C. [sect] 1612(a)) [ndash] To give adequate notice and an opportunity to

comment upon the formulation of standards, criteria, and guidelines applicable to Forest Service programs.

[middot] 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1242(a)(2) [ndash] National Scenic Trail Purpose is [hellip] for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.

[middot] 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1244(f) [ndash] The responsible Secretary shall ... submit ... a comprehensive plan for the acquisition, management, development, and use of the trail, including but not limited to, the following items: Specific objectives and practices to be observed in the management of the trail, including the identification of all significant natural, historical, and cultural resources to be preserved ... an identified carrying capacity of the trail and a plan for its implementation[hellip].

[middot] 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(a)(2) [ndash] Pursuant to section 5(a), the appropriate Secretary shall select the rights-of-way for national scenic and national historic trails and shall publish notice thereof of the availability of appropriate maps or descriptions in the Federal Register.

[middot] 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1246(c) [ndash] National scenic trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related-public-use facilities. Other uses along the trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, may be permitted by the Secretary charged with the administration of the trail[hellip] To the extent practicable, efforts be made to avoid activities incompatible with the purposes for which such trails were established. The use of motorized vehicles by the general public along any National Scenic Trail shall be prohibited... Other uses along the historic trails and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, and which, at the time of designation, are allowed by administrative regulations, including the use of motorized vehicles, shall be permitted.[rdquo]

[middot] E.O. 13195 [ndash] Trails for America in the 21st Century [ndash] Federal agencies will ... protect, connect, promote, and assist trails of all types throughout the United States. This will be accomplished by: ... (b) Protecting the trail corridors associated with national scenic trails...to the degrees necessary to ensure that the values for which each trail was established remain intact....

[middot] Executive Order 11644 and 11989 [ndash] Use of off-road vehicles on the public lands.

[middot] 36 CFR 212 Subpart B - Designation of Roads, Trails, and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use ([sect][sect] 212.50 - 212.57)

[middot] 36 CFR [sect] 212 Subpart C - Over-Snow Vehicle Use ([sect][sect] 212.80 - 212.81)

[middot] CDNST Comprehensive Plan

o Chapter III.E, Land Management Plans (74 FR 51124) [ndash] The final amendments are consistent with the nature and purposes of the CDNST identified in the 1976 CDNST Study Report and 1977 CDNST Final Environmental Impact Statement adopted by the Forest Service in 1981 (40 FR 150). The final amendments and directives will be applied through land management planning and project decisions following requisite environmental analysis.

o Chapter IV.A, Nature and Purposes (74 FR 51124) [ndash] Administer the CDNST consistent with the nature and purposes for which this National Scenic Trail was established. The CDNST was established by an Act of Congress on November 10, 1978 (16 USC

1244(a)). The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST corridor.

\*

\* Chapter IV.B.2, Rights-of-Way Extent (74 FR 51119) [ndash] The rights-of-way for the trails will be of sufficient width to protect natural, scenic, cultural, and historic features along the trails and to provide needed public use facilities....

\* Chapter IV.B.4, Scenery Management (74 FR 51124) [ndash]The CDNST is a concern level 1 route, with a scenic integrity objective of high or very high.23

\* Chapter IV.B.5, Recreation Management (74 FR 51125) [ndash] Manage the CDNST to provide high-quality

scenic, primitive hiking and pack and saddle stock opportunities. Backpacking, nature walking, day hiking, horseback riding, nature photography, mountain climbing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are compatible with the nature and purposes of the CDNST. Bicycle use may be allowed on the CDNST (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)) if the use is consistent with the applicable land and resource management plan and will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST. Use the ROS system in delineating and integrating recreation opportunities in managing the CDNST.<sup>24</sup>

\*

FSM 2353.44b(10) [ndash] Bicycle use may be allowed on the CDNST (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)), using the appropriate trail design standards, if the use is consistent with the applicable CDNST unit plan (FSM 2353.44b(2) and will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST (FSM 2353.42).

\*

Chapter IV.B.6. Motorized Use (74 FR 51125) [ndash] Motor vehicle use by the general public is prohibited by the National Trails System Act unless that use:

- \* Is necessary to meet emergencies;
- \* Is necessary to enable adjacent landowners or those with valid outstanding rights to have reasonable access to their lands or rights;
- \* Is for the purpose of allowing private landowners who have agreed to include their lands in the CDNST by cooperative agreement to use or cross those lands or adjacent lands from time to time in accordance with Forest Service regulations; or
- \* Is on a motor vehicle route that crosses the CDNST, if that use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST;

\*

Is designated in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, on National Forest System lands or is allowed on public lands and:

\* The vehicle class and width were allowed on that segment of the CDNST prior to November 10, 1978, and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST or

\* That segment of the CDNST was constructed as a road prior to November 10, 1978; or

\* In the case of over-snow vehicles, is allowed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart C and the use will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the CDNST.

\* FSM 2353.44b(11) [ndash] Motor vehicle use by the general public is prohibited on the CDNST, unless that use is consistent with the applicable CDNST unit plan and: [repeats Comprehensive Plan Chapter IV.B.6 list and refers to CDNST unit plan].

\* 16 U.S.C. [sect] 1604(f)(1) [ndash] Form one integrated plan

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.1(f) [ndash] Compliant with all applicable laws

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.3 [ndash] Best Available Scientific information

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.7 [ndash] Plan Components (where they apply)

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.9(a)(1) - Ecosystem Integrity

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.10(a) [ndash] Integrated Resource Management for Multiple Use

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.10(b)(1)(i) [ndash] Sustainable recreation

\* 36 CFR [sect] 219.10(b)(1)(vi) [ndash] Management of other designated areas

\*

36 CFR § 219.11(a)(1)(iii) [ndash] Timber production not compatible with desired conditions

\* FSH 1909.12 part 22 [ndash] Requirements for an Integrated Plan

- \* FSH 1909.12 part 22.1 [ndash] Plan Components
- \* FSH 1909.12 part 23 [ndash] Resource Requirements for Integrated Plan Components
- \* FSM 2310.3 (WO Amendment 2300-90-1) [ndash] Recreation Planning
- \* FSM 2382.1 [ndash] Scenery Management System
- \* FSH 1909.12 part 23.23a [ndash] Sustainable Recreation Resources
- \* FSH 1909.12 part 23.23f [ndash] Scenery, Aesthetic Values, and Viewsheds
- \* FSM 2353.4 [ndash] National Scenic Trails [ndash] CDNST (74 FR 51125) 25
- \* FSH 1909.12 part 24.43 - National Scenic and Historic Trails

- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1502.13 [ndash] Purposed and Need
- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1502.14 [ndash] Proposed Action and Alternatives
- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1502.15 [ndash] Affected Environment
- \* 40 CFR [sect][sect] 1502.16, 1508.7 (2020), 1508.8 (2020) [ndash] Environmental Consequences
- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1502.24 [ndash] Methodology and Scientific Accuracy (2005)
- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1502.23 [ndash] Methodology and Scientific Accuracy (2020)
- \* 40 CFR [sect] 1503.4(a) [ndash] Response to Comments (2005)

#### Section VII. Specialized and Expert Knowledge

My professional expertise is in dispersed recreation and designated area management and natural resources planning.<sup>26</sup> I was the principal resource specialist in of the development and considerations of the final amendments to the CDNST Comprehensive Plan and final directives (Federal Register, October 5, 2009, 74 FR 51116). I coauthored a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Technical Guide with Warren Bacon and George Stankey. My academic experience includes receiving a M.S. in Wildland Recreation Management and a B.S. in Wildlife Biology.

My assessment and objection of the Proposed Plan, FEIS, and Draft ROD is also based on recreation research and handbooks including information found in:

1. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: A Framework for Planning, Management, and Research, General Technical Report PNW-98,<sup>27</sup> 1979, by Roger Clark and George Stankey;
2. ROS Users Guide 1982 (and ROS Book 1986) (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. ROS Users Guide. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service);
3. Recreation Opportunity Setting as a Management Tool Technical Guide,<sup>28</sup> 1986, by George Stankey, Greg Warren, and Warren Bacon;
4. Landscape Aesthetics, A Handbook for Scenery Management, Agricultural Handbook Number 701, 1995;
5. Studies in Outdoor Recreation: Search and Research for Satisfaction. Studies in Outdoor Recreation: Search and Research for Satisfaction by Robert Manning, 2010, and
6. Other similar publications and papers.<sup>29</sup>

My most recent CDNST Planning Handbook addresses new information is posted online at NSTrail.org. This planning handbook is updated as needed to address new information.

Thank you for accepting and considering this objection and proposed resolution as described in Section I Part C.