

STATE OF COLORADO
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DATE: June 8, 2006

TO: Jim Goodyear

FROM: Steve Yamashita

RE: Recommendations to the State Inventoried Roadless Area Task Force on the White River National Forest Inventoried Roadless Areas

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on roadless area designations on the White River National Forest. The following comments have been prepared by Northwest Region CDOW staff for use by the Inventoried Roadless Area Task Force in evaluating potential wildlife impacts to existing IRA's by future road construction or improvements.

The U.S. Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas are generally undeveloped portions of the Forest greater than 5,000 acres in size. If fewer than 5,000 acres they must be manageable in its natural condition, or be a self-contained ecosystem, or adjacent to a designated wilderness area and therefore contribute to a larger undeveloped area and does not contain facilities for purposes of travel by vehicles greater than 50 inches in width.

Our understanding of the IRA designation is that it prohibits new road construction and reconstruction of existing roads with the following exceptions; to protect human health and safety, to conduct environmental cleanup, to allow for the reserved rights provided by statute, to prevent resource damage, to rectify hazardous road conditions, and/or roads needed in conjunction with mineral leases. The roadless definition also prohibits cutting, sale, and removal of timber with the following exceptions; removal of small diameter timber, improvement of habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, and to maintain or restore ecosystem composition.

The White River National Forest identified approximately 90 total roadless areas, totaling 640,000 acres, for the National Roadless Rule of 2001. Of the 90 areas, 37 were found capable and available for recommended wilderness. The remaining 53 areas are identified as roadless but lacking sufficient wilderness characteristics or are not available. Comments are submitted for 82 of the total 90 areas.

Significant consequences of new roads or motorized trails are increased levels of sediment in waterways, habitat fragmentation, and wildlife dispersal from preferred habitats. Colorado's roadless areas offer some of the highest quality wildlife habitat and subsequently wildlife populations in the state. Pristine areas and/or roadless areas provide hunters, anglers, wildlife watchers, and backcountry users a quality natural experience.

It is the mission of the CDOW to, "...protect, preserve, enhance and manage the wildlife for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of this state and it's visitors". The following recommendations to maintain existing roadless area designations are consistent with the CDOW's management principles and goals as outlined in the CDOW Strategic Plan. These management emphases include multi-species, communities across landscapes, protection of threatened and endangered species protect and enhance high priority habitats for deer and elk as well as habitat for waterfowl, upland , aquatic species and species of special concern, as well as maintaining hunting and fishing recreation in the state.

Although each IRA listed identifies potential impacts of additional new roads and/or reconstruction of roads to wildlife populations, it is assumed that specific impacts will be addressed through a systematic analysis, consistent with National Environmental Policy Act requirements as applied by the United States Forest Service. The review team for these comments included Area Wildlife Managers and District Wildlife Managers. The regional comments were reviewed and complied by the Assistant Regional Manager.

IRA Synopsis

The following summary information identifies wildlife species of significance by IRA the specific habitat importance for those species and management roadless recommendations. Individual IRA petition forms are included which list in detail specific species and relevance in evaluation for consideration by the IRA Task Force.

ADAMS MOUNTAIN (49)

The IRA is located south of the town of Eagle and approximately three miles west of the Holy Cross Wilderness Area. The southwest boundary of the unit is located near Sylvan Lake State Recreation Area managed by Colorado State Parks. Most of the use into the IRA originates from the visitors to the State Park. Lodgepole pine is the dominant vegetative feature within the IRA with some spruce –fir at the higher elevations. Elk will winter in the area with mule deer, elk and black bear using the area in the spring, summer and fall. The recently reintroduced Merriam's turkeys are also utilizing the area during the non-snow months. The area has been classified as potential for lynx foraging and denning. On the southeastern border of the unit a viable Colorado River Cutthroat population exists in an approximate two mile section of Hat Creek. Protection of this creek section from erosion and disturbance is essential for the continued survival of the fish population.

Management Recommendations: Maintain the current level of access into the unit for both roads and trails. Monitor, document and physically close any non-authorized access points into the area. Manage for the preservation and enhancement of the riparian system on Hat Creek.

ASHCROFT (83)

This is a narrow IRA which lies above Ashcroft and contains a cross country ski area adjacent to the Maroon Bell-Snowmass Wilderness Area. The IRA contains aspen, spruce-fir, and open meadows. It provides some summer range for elk, mule deer, and black bear. Recently in the last few years, elk have begun to winter along the ridges above Ashcroft. It is marginal winter range with fairly deep snow.

There is an existing motorized access road which leads to a wilderness trailhead. This trailhead receives heavy use during the summer. There are several groomed cross country ski trails. Most wildlife use occurs farther up the slope in the wilderness area.

Management recommendations: Maintaining this area as roadless may be beneficial to wildlife; however, most wildlife use occurs above the IRA in the wilderness area or along the small ridge where roads would not be built. It is a narrow IRA containing a cross country ski area so wildlife values are minimal.

ASSIGNATION RIDGE (69)

This IRA is a large section of relatively undisturbed habitat. The area serves as elk and mule deer summer range, elk summer concentration, elk and mule deer winter range, severe winter range and winter concentration area, elk production area, black bear summer range and fall concentration area, Bald Eagle winter foraging, turkey overall range, as well as habitat for a variety of avian and small mammal species. The IRA receives some hunting pressure for deer and elk, and hunters that venture away from the roads often achieve greater success than those in the surrounding areas.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction in order to protect its rich diversity of wildlife and habitat values including big game winter range, elk summer concentration and production areas, as well as provide a good quality hunting experience.

BALDY MOUNTAIN (67)

The Baldy Mountain IRA is summer range and production area for mule deer and elk and is also important for black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey, and a variety of raptors and bird species. It is also potential lynx habitat. The Little Rock Creek within the IRA is identified as a Colorado River Cutthroat Trout conservation area. The IRA is an island in the middle of

relatively good roads and easy access for hunters and other recreation. It is currently hunted and hiked successfully without adding additional roads for access.

Management recommendation: Baldy Mountain IRA should be maintained and managed as a roadless area. It provides an area of relief from traffic, camping and heavy human use while being a small enough area to allow ready access by hiking and horseback for hunters and other recreators. The roadless designation has protected the area for summer range and production areas for the above wildlife species and allowed a low human impact area for the animals and human visitors.

BASALT MOUNTAIN (51b)

Basalt Mountain is an IRA located north of Basalt in Eagle County. The elevation ranges from 7,000 ft to about 10,800 ft. Vegetation within the IRA includes sagebrush, open meadows, pinon-juniper, oak, aspen, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and spruce-fir. The steep slopes and red sandstone buttes at Seven Castles provide protection and production areas for bighorn sheep. Mule deer and elk winter habitat, as well as transitional and summer range occurs for this species. Black bear summer and fall range, Merriam's turkey overall range, and mountain lion overall range are contained in this area. Lynx have been documented traveling through this area.

There have been problems with unauthorized motorized vehicles on some of the trails and roads. There is sufficient access for disperse recreational users and hunters throughout the IRA.

Management recommendations: The existing roadless areas should be preserved to ensure that the diversity of wildlife using the IRA retain the high quality habitat that is currently present. Additional roads will add stress and dispersal of animals out of the area. Access is currently available throughout the IRA which allows dispersal of big game hunters, high quality hunting experiences, and a harvest to help meet population management objectives.

BERRY CREEK (25)

Berry Creek has areas of rolling valleys to very steep canyons; vegetation consists of spruce-fir, aspen, lodgepole pine, mountain shrubs, sagebrush, riparian and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, Colorado River cutthroat trout, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. This IRA contains extensive critical winter habitat for both deer and elk; winter range, severe winter range, winter concentration areas, and migration corridors. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Colorado River cutthroat trout are found in Berry Creek. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA has numerous roads just outside of its borders but the steep canyon still provide excellent solitude and cover for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting near roads yet with the ability to escape the roads and its associated disturbance. The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA are 5.4 forested flora and fauna, 5.41 deer and elk winter range.

Management recommendations: Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use. This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

BIG RIDGE TO SOUTH FORK A (5A)

The Big Ridge to South Fork A IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: black bear, elk, bighorn sheep, wild turkey, moose, mule deer, mountain lion, bald eagle, Colorado River Native cutthroat trout, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health and diversity of the habitat required by these wildlife species. This IRA is currently rated as capable, but not available for the roadless designation by the White River National Forest. It is recommended that current road management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area, and allow for the recovery of threatened/endangered wildlife species that could potentially utilize this area in the future. No further restriction of motorized access is needed in this relatively remote IRA.

Construction of additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have

negative impacts to migration, harvest, and production of the White River Elk Herd and many other terrestrial wildlife species. In addition, new road construction projects would likely have many negative impacts to the many high-quality aquatic habitats within this IRA and could jeopardize the survival of Colorado River Native cutthroat trout populations.

Management recommendation: Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects

BIG RIDGE TO SOUTH FORK B (5B)

The Big Ridge to South Fork B IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: black bear, elk, wild turkey, mule deer, mountain lion, bald eagle, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health and diversity of the habitat required by these wildlife species. This IRA is dominated by steep forested slopes, fragile soils, and abundant stream/riparian areas which are not conducive to road construction and are extremely susceptible to erosion and sedimentation if disturbed. Therefore, it is recommended that current roadless management practices continue in this IRA in order to maintain the ecological value and integrity of this 6,019 acre parcel. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area, and allow for the recovery of threatened/endangered wildlife species that could potentially utilize this area in the future. No further restriction of motorized access is needed in this relatively remote and rugged IRA. Construction of permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have negative impacts to migration, harvest, and production of the White River Elk Herd and many other terrestrial wildlife species.

Management recommendation: Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects.

BLACK LAKE EAST / BLACK LAKE WEST (20/19)

Existing roads are used seasonally and provide important access for hunters for deer and elk management. Existing roads may also provide important access for vegetative management in large, decadent lodgepole pine forests within the IRAs. The Black Lakes East and West IRAs include habitat that serves as overall range, winter range, severe winter range, winter concentration area (East), and a production area for elk.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing roadless designation in both IRAs.

BOULDER (27)

A vegetative management buffer may be necessary to provide protection of the Boulder Creek and Pebble Creek subdivisions from wildfire. The Boulder IRA includes habitat that serves as overall range, winter range, winter concentration, production area, summer concentration area, and movement corridor for elk.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing IRA roadless designation

BUDGES (14)

The Budes IRA is has areas of rolling hills to very steep slopes, Englemanns spruce, subalpine fir, Douglas-fir, aspen, grassland and riparian meadows, and grass-shrub steppe. The IRA is adjacent to the Flat Tops Wilderness. The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA are 1.31 Backcountry, non-motorized and 4.4 Recreation Rivers, Designated and Eligible. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, snowshoe hare, and Colorado River Cutthroat trout, as well as other wildlife. There is potential lynx habitat in this IRA. In the summer the IRA provides quality deer and elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Due to the limited vehicle access and system trails the IRA provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

Portions of the area adjacent to the IRA is heavily impacted by motorized recreation. The IRA currently provides some degree of solitude for wildlife in an area highly impacted by motorized recreation. Establishing this area as roadless, will allow for increased habitat diversity for a variety of wildlife species. The IRA provides quality big game and small game

hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance. The IRA is significant for its lack of highly traveled roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

Management recommendations: No new roads should be constructed in this IRA, and existing roads or user created routes should be decommissioned and deconstructed to provide quality wildlife habitat. Any temporary roads built to meet management objectives should also be deconstructed after the life of the project.

BUFFER MOUNTAIN (33)

Buffer Mountain has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the winter the IRA provides deer winter range and migration corridor and for elk winter range, winter concentration areas, severe winter range and migration corridors. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Moose have colonized this IRA on their own and use the riparian areas for overall range. The IRA does have potential lynx habitat. Two of the USFS management prescriptions are 5.4 forested flora and fauna and 5.41 deer and elk winter range. The IRA does not have any system roads within its borders but there are system non-motorized trails. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

CORRAL CREEK (37)

Corral Creek supports A strain Colorado River cutthroat trout which need to be protected with its proximity to I-70. Corral Creek IRA is on a movement corridor for elk.

Management Recommendation: Maintain the roadless designation

CRYSTAL RIVER (70B)

This IRA is a long narrow section of land bordered on the east by the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness and on the west by the Crystal River. The cliffs above the Crystal River provide important winter range, and production areas for bighorn sheep and elk. The USFS and CDOW have agreed to seasonal winter closures along Avalanche Creek road in order to protect wintering big game animals. Increased roads and related impacts could have a negative impact on reproductive success and winter survival of big game animals in the area.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help protect winter range values and reproductive success.

BURNT MOUNTAIN (76)

This is a small but critical IRA comprised of spruce-fir, aspen, and open meadows. Burnt Mountain provides a critical migration corridor for elk which is restricted and confined by an active ski area and adjacent residential development. There are no alternative migration corridors. In addition, it provides an elk production area, summer solitude, and transition range. Any new roads or trail construction and their associated disturbance will jeopardize and fragment this critical habitat resulting in decreased reproductive success, disturbance, displacement, added stress, and decreased sportsmen recreation opportunity and harvest success. This area also provides a valuable dispersal and movement corridor for lynx with the potential for winter foraging. A lynx has been observed and confirmed in this area. Construction of new roads and trails will only fragment this habitat which could impact lynx movement and foraging.

There is a proposal to increase summer recreational opportunities in the adjacent Elk Camp area of the Snowmass Ski Area. This will bring a drastic increase in recreating public in close proximity to Burnt Mountain potentially threatening the habitat integrity and effectiveness.

Management recommendations: This critical IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or roads in order to protect its value for elk migration, production, summer solitude, and forest carnivores. It is critical that seasonal and temporal closures remain in effect and are actively enforced. Any new roads or trails will only further jeopardize this important habitat area.

CHICAGO RIDGE (59)

Chicago Ridge has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, high alpine meadows (tundra), mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, ptarmigan, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, ptarmigan, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Lynx have been documented in the IRA and one of the USFS management prescriptions 5.5 is forested landscape linkages. The IRA has one closed road and no system summer hiking trails all of which increase its value to wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

Management recommendations: Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use. This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

DEEP CREEK (23)

Deep Creek IRA has areas of rolling hills to very steep slopes and high cliff bands and scree fields, high ridges and open meadows with stands containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, Douglas-fir, grassland meadows, and riparian areas.

The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, bighorn sheep, turkey, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, Peregrine Falcon, eagles (both Golden and Bald), Colorado River Cutthroat trout, a variety of bat species, snowshoe hare. There is an active peregrine falcon nest in the IRA. The IRA does contain part of the ½ mile buffer for nesting areas. There is potential lynx and Mexican Spotted Owl habitat in this IRA. In the summer the IRA provides quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Additionally, in the summer the IRA provides quality bighorn sheep habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA is part of a bighorn sheep supplemental transplant to rebuild the historical bighorn sheep herd on the FlatTops and in the FlatTops Wilderness area. The IRA contains Deep Creek, which has been proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 1.5 Wild Rivers and 5.4 Flora and Fauna Habitats. The IRA has a few system trails, however, the majority of the summer hiking is cross country, not on designated trails. The lack of roads and trails in the area provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

The IRA has two authorized roads; one on the southwestern area; FDR 1852.1, (slated for closure under WRNF FP) which leads to Johnson Pasture and a trail beyond, and one within and directly adjacent to the northern boundary (FDR 618). The area adjacent to the IRA, both on the northern and southern boundaries is heavily impacted year around by motorized recreation; including OHV's and snow machines. Adjacent to the IRA and offset from the southern canyon rim is the Coffee Pot Road (FS Road 600) with several spur routes in the direction of the IRA; it is heavily traveled, year round including the winter by snowmobile. The IRA currently provides some degree of solitude for wildlife in an area highly impacted by motorized recreation. Maintaining this area in its current roadless status will allow for increased habitat diversity for a variety of wildlife species. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance, especially near the center and northeastern area.

The IRA is significant for its lack of roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction to help maintain high wildlife values and a quality hunting experience. Any existing roads or user created routes should be decommissioned to help maintain high quality wildlife habitat. In addition, included are suggested management recommendations which differ from existing USFS WRNF Plan.

- 1) IRA's Deep Creek (#23) and Sweetwater B (#15B) should be combined into one roadless area. The current delineation of the two separate IRA's allows for a narrow section of the area between the Deep Creek canyon (IRA #23) and Ballixsburg Spring and Short Creek Springs (IRA #15B) to remain roaded. This connection fragments this potentially larger more appropriate roadless area. Combining these two roadless areas: Deep Creek IRA #23- the northeast portion of the IRA, and Sweetwater B IRA #15B - the southeast corner of the IRA will maintain connectivity on a larger scale. Further fragmentation could have a negative impact on the landscape scale movements and health of all wildlife species in the area. Roadless areas that are adjacent to each other play a vital role in providing connected ecosystems and habitat for wildlife in Colorado.

DERBY (8b)

The Derby IRA provides essential habitat needs for mammals, herptiles and fish including but not limited to bighorn sheep, black bear, elk, mountain lion and mule deer. The adjacent South and Middle Derby creeks also offer excellent cutthroat, brown, rainbow, and brook trout fisheries. The small IRA is bordered by the Flattops Wilderness on the west, south fork of the Derby creek on the south, middle fork of the Derby creek on the north and federal and private lands to the east. It's also between two larger (~12,000 acres to north and south) IRA's. Motorized or foot traffic exits on three of four sides of the IRA. Elk management in this area relies heavily on limited vehicular access to prevent the pushing of elk onto adjacent private lands. This can severely influence harvest success rates and therefore our ability to meet harvest objectives. Unbroken roadless areas are essential for preserving the ecological health and integrity of the habitat used by many wildlife species.

Management Recommendation: Due to the amount of summer and fall motor vehicle recreation along the Derby IRA borders as well as elk and native fish management concerns we recommend that the roadless designation remain on this IRA.

DOME PEAK (6)

The Dome Peak IRA in the Flat Tops provides essential habitat needs for wildlife species including, but not limited to black bear, elk, mule deer, and Northern Goshawk. Additional species found in this IRA include a variety of passerine bird as well as a number small mammal species. This IRA is comprised of two contiguous sections and is administered by both the Routt National Forest and the White River National Forest. Only a small portion of the Dome Peak IRA is in the within the Routt National Forest (IRA# - R21123). The majority of it is within the White River National Forest (IRA# 6).

The Dome Peak IRA within the Routt National Forest is bounded on the west by the Flat Tops Wilderness area. Motorized use occurs to the north on USFS lands, to the east on adjacent USFS and private lands, and to the south on USFS lands outside of the portion of the Dome Peak IRA within the White River National Forest (IRA# 6). Elk management in this area relies heavily on limited vehicular access to prevent elk movement onto adjacent private lands, which severely influences harvest success rates. In addition, this IRA has numerous perennial and ephemeral streams that drain into major lakes and reservoirs. Road development could lead to habitat degradation and sedimentation concerns that would affect important fisheries.

Management Recommendation: Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for preserving the ecological health and integrity of the habitat used by many wildlife species. Because of the high amount of motor vehicle recreation in areas adjacent to the Dome IRA, we recommend that the roadless designation remain on this IRA.

EAST DIVIDE/ FOUR MILEPARK (60)

The East Divide/Four Mile Park IRA is designated as summer range and production area for elk and mule deer. It is also important habitat for black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey, various raptors and other bird species, and potential lynx habitat. The area is currently hunted frequently by hunters choosing to access it by horseback or hiking. The IRA has yielded more hunting success in recent years than the surrounding forest that is more easily accessed by vehicle.

Management Recommendation: The East Divide/ Four Mile Park IRA should remain and be managed as roadless. The East Divide area is seeing increased recreation impact beginning when snow levels allow access and continuing throughout the summer. Vehicle activity in the IRA would push the wildlife herds off of important production areas. The

success enjoyed by more “ambitious” hunters would also be diminished as the wildlife would be disbursed by heavier human impact. The East Divide/Four Mile Park IRA provides an important area of low human impact in a larger area that is seeing significant increases in human activity. It is a necessary to reserve such places for the production and habitation of wildlife.

EAST VAIL (36)

East Vail has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA does have potential lynx habitat and one of the USFS management prescriptions 5.5 is forested landscape linkages. The IRA does not have any system roads within its borders but there is one system hiking trail. The trail is closed in the spring to protect elk calving. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

Management recommendations: Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use. This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

EAST WILLOW (73)

The East Willow IRA is important summer and fall range for elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, and various bird species as well as potential lynx habitat. It is an “end of the road” type area in the White River National Forest. The existing roads accessing the area are often steep and difficult to travel. It is currently utilized by many hunters and hikers but is one of the places that only the more adventurous types usually access. Because it is more remote it is prime habitat for the above species. It is important to maintain areas where these species can avoid human impact and the East Willow IRA is a prime example of such a place.

Management recommendation: This area should remain managed as a roadless area. It is one of the areas remaining within this portion of the White River National Forest that is considered difficult to access. This has created an area that wildlife can avoid heavy human activity from recreation and hunting. It provides a quality opportunity to the hunter or hiker that desires to get off of the beaten path and enter an area where it is less likely to run into human traffic.

ELK CREEK B (17B)

The Elk Creek B IRA is comprised of steep canyon topography with several riparian zones along Deep Creek, Meadow Creek and Main Elk Creek. The vegetation types in this area vary with elevation, but are mainly comprised of Douglas fir, spruce- fir, aspen, pinyon- juniper, oakbrush, and service berry. The riparian zones contain typical riparian vegetation. This IRA provides essential habitat requirements for many mammals, birds, herptiles, fish, etc., including but not limited to; Bighorn sheep, overall range, summer range, production areas, winter range and winter concentration areas, black bear, overall range, and summer concentration area, Brazilian Free-tailed bat overall range, elk, overall range, winter range, winter concentration, summer concentration, summer range and production areas, mule deer winter and summer range, Peregrine falcon, potential nesting, turkey, overall range and mountain Lion, overall range.

A significant attribute of this roadless area is that the Clinetop Bighorn Sheep herd resides within the IRA. This small herd of sheep has maintained a population within the canyons of Main Elk Creek, East Elk Creek, Meadow Creek and Deep Creek. This herd is sensitive to many factors regarding land use on the National Forest. The lack of roads in the area is a significant benefit to the viability of the herd.

Management recommendation: Since there are currently no motorized roads in this area, it is vital that no new roads be constructed in this IRA. It is recommended that the Elk Creek B IRA be maintained as a roadless area. Non-fragmented roadless areas are essential for maintaining ecological health of the habitat used by a variety species of wildlife. Construction of new roads or motorized trails in this area would result in the fragmentation of existing wildlife habitat. Additionally, new roads and motorized trails would increase the level of silt in the riparian systems that serve as important

habitat for numerous aquatic species. Maintaining this area under a roadless designation will help prevent habitat fragmentation and degradation. It will also provide wildlife species with an area of low human activity.

ELLIOT RIDGE (13)

The Mahan Lake road has been closed for numerous years and does not provide motor vehicle access to the lake, or for vegetative management. Elliott Creek supports A strain Colorado River cutthroat trout. This IRA contains elk winter range and production areas.

Management recommendation: Maintain the existing IRA roadless designation. The buffer around the old road that leads to Mahan Lake should also be included into the roadless designation.

FAWN CREEK/ LITTLE LOST PARK (3)

The Fawn Creek/Little Lost Park IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: elk, mule deer, black bear, Colorado River Native cutthroat trout, bald eagles, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health, productivity, and diversity of the habitat required by these wildlife species. When combined with adjacent IRAs (Morapas A and Morapas B), the significance of this IRA increases greatly. Construction of additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have negative impacts primarily to migration and harvest of the White River Elk Herd. This is the largest elk herd in the world with an estimated population of 37,900 animals. This same herd provides hunting opportunity for over 30,000 hunters. Elk hunting in northwest Colorado contributes substantially to the local economy. In addition, new road construction projects would likely have numerous negative impacts to aquatic habitats within this IRA and could jeopardize the survival of Colorado River Native cutthroat trout populations.

Management recommendation: Current road management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area while still allowing for reasonable public access to enjoy these same species. No further restrictions of motorized access are needed. Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects.

FREEMAN CREEK (28)

Freeman Creek has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, Colorado River cutthroat trout, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. Moose colonized this IRA on their own and use it as overall habitat. Winter use of the IRA is limited to pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare, moose, Colorado River cutthroat trout and lynx because of the high elevation. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA are 1.2 recommended wilderness and 1.31 backcountry recreation non-motorized. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

GALLO HILL (82)

This IRA contains a variety of habitat needs for many species, including elk winter range, severe winter range, winter concentration area, elk production area, bighorn sheep severe winter range, winter concentration, and bighorn sheep production area. Maintaining the IRA as roadless will reduce habitat fragmentation and minimize disturbance, stress, and displacement of big game. New roads or trails could impact elk production areas resulting in decreased reproductive success

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help protect winter range values, reproductive success and maintain good quality hunting experience.

GAME CREEK (39)

Game Creek has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, peregrine falcon and lynx. The Eagle Valley deer migration corridor runs thru this IRA. The CDOW purchased 119 acres to protect this corridor from development in the 1970's. The deer use this IRA as a staging area before migrating under I-70 at the Vail underpass. The IRA contain critical elk habitat: winter range, winter concentration areas, and severe winter range. In the summer the IRA provides high quality for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. There is an active peregrine falcon nest on the southwest edge of the IRA. The IRA does contain part of the ½ mile buffer for nesting areas. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA does not contain any system roads but there are 3 system trails. The Two Elk trail has seasonal closures to protect the elk migration and calving areas. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to CDOW property (Vail Underpass). The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA include 5.5 forested landscape linkages, 5.41 deer and elk winter range. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

GRIZZLY CREEK (26)

Grizzly Creek has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high cliff bands and scree fields, high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, grassland meadows, riparian meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, bighorn sheep, turkey, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, Colorado River Cutthroat trout, snowshoe hare. The IRA does contain potential lynx, Mexican Spotted Owl and Peregrine Falcon (adjacent to nesting area) habitat. Recently moose have been documented in the IRA. In the summer the IRA provides quality habitat for both deer and elk; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA, despite its high elevational points (9,000 – 10,250), provides critical elk winter range, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas. Additionally, the IRA provides quality bighorn sheep habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, migration corridors and winter range and winter concentration areas.

The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 1.31 – Backcountry, non-motorized. The IRA has no roads within its boundary. Above the western boundary on the canyon rim, there is one historic road, Transfer Trail, with several OHV sized off-shoots or user created roads, it receives heavy use. There are several system hiking trails within the IRA.

The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction to help maintain high wildlife values and a quality hunting experience. Any existing pioneered roads should be deconstructed in this IRA. In addition, recommended management differs from USFS WRNF Plan as follows: Bighorn Sheep – 5.42 prescription should be incorporated into this IRA to assist in bighorn sheep management. Emphasis should be to provide adequate amounts of quality forage, cover, escape terrain, and solitude for bighorn sheep as well as other species, while allowing habitat manipulation that provides other multiple-use resources. Additionally this would aid in addressing adequate temporal and/or spatial separation between native and domestic sheep.

GYPSUM CREEK (48)

The Gypsum Creek IRA is south of the town of Gypsum and approximately 10 miles from Holy Cross Wilderness Area. Vegetation in the unit ranges from mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine with the dominant species being spruce –fir habitat. Mule deer and elk use this area for transitional and summer range. The recently reintroduced Merriam’s turkey population has been sighted in this area in the spring, summer and fall. Black bear use the area as summer range and the area has been classified as potential lynx foraging and denning habitat. The IRA has limited motorized access to the majority of the area with the exception of the boundary roads. The other exception is on the southwest edge of the unit where a number of timber sale roads exist. Historically the area has received a high concentration of illegal OHV use in the northwest portion. Even with these motorized access areas, this IRA maintains large unbroken areas of wildlife habitat. The unit receives moderate hunting pressure and allows hunters to disperse throughout the unit.

Management recommendations: Currently there are sufficient roads and trails in this IRA to allow for the dispersal of users throughout the area. Unauthorized roads and trails should be physically closed upon discovery. The administration of timber sale roads to eliminate unnecessary parallel routes, establish seasonal closures, and/or establish administrative access to only contractors while performing duties described in their sale contract should be considered. Timber roads should be physically closed and rehabilitated upon completion of the sale.

HARDSCABBLE (44)

The Hardscrabble IRA is south of the towns of Eagle and Gypsum and west of the Holy Cross Wilderness Area approximately 6 miles. Vegetation within the IRA varies from mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and spruce-fir type habitats and ranges in elevation from 7,600 feet to nearly 10,500 feet at the summit of Hardscrabble Mountain. Mule deer and elk winter habitat lie within the IRA as well as transitional and summer range for these species. Black bear summer habitat and the recently reintroduced Merriam’s turkey are using the area during the spring, fall and summer, and the area because the dominant vegetative species are spruce-fir has been classified as potential lynx foraging and denning habitat. Access within the unit is limited with the exception of a number of timber sale roads in the north east section of the unit. Access is sufficient to disperse recreational users and hunters throughout the IRA. Unauthorized trails and roads have been and remain a common problem for this unit, sectioning the large tracts of unbroken habitat and disturbing and dispersing the wildlife in the area. In order to maintain the high quality habitat, allow wildlife to winter on public land, and provide quality hunting opportunities the unauthorized trails and roads need to be documented and physically closed and rehabilitated with natural vegetation.

Management Recommendations: Maintain the current authorized access routes through the IRA. Winter travel routes need to be designed and planned to allow recreationists access to the higher elevations while avoiding critical wildlife wintering areas. Any unauthorized access points should be documented and physical closed with proper rehabilitation of the disturbed area.

HAY PARK (70A)

This IRA lies next to Mt. Sopris and the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. It contains aspen, spruce-fir, open meadows, and riparian corridor along West Sopris, Prince, and Thomas Creeks. Its primary value is for elk production and mule deer and elk summer range/summer solitude. A variety of avian species including blue grouse inhabit the area. Black bear inhabit the area summer through fall.

Management recommendation: This IRA should remain roadless to protect elk production and summer solitude areas. Due to its varied habitat from aspen to meadows to spruce-fir and riparian, it has tremendous value for a variety of wildlife species.

HOLY CROSS CITY (58)

Holy Cross City has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, high alpine meadows (tundra), lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, ptarmigan, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, boreal toad and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, ptarmigan, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat and there is one breeding area for boreal toads.

The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain wildlife values and protect the boreal toad breeding area.

HOOSIER RIDGE (56)

The Hoosier Ridge IRA is located within overall range, summer concentration area, and a migration area for elk. This IRA is also overall range and summer range for mountain goats.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing IRA roadless designation.

HOMESTAKE (54)

Homestake has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, ptarmigan, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, moose and lynx. Even with its high elevation (9,000 – 11,520) the IRA provides critical elk winter range, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas. Moose have colonized the IRA on their own and use the IRA for year round habitat. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Lynx have been documented in the IRA. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.41 deer and elk winter range. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

HOUSETOP MOUNTAIN (62)

Housetop Mountain IRA has a wide variety of plant systems that vary with elevation including Douglas fir, spruce-fir, spruce-fir-aspen, aspen, pinyon-juniper, oak-serviceberry. Housetop Mountain IRA is home to a wide variety of wildlife species including elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, and Bighorn Sheep. The area is very steep, often barren slope and cliffs and the climate is semi-arid. At the upper elevations and ridge tops, aspen, spruce-fir, and mountain shrub offer a wide variety of habitats for mule deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, to name a few.

Elk use the Housetop Mountain IRA year round which can partially be attributed to the solitude offered by the lack of motorized disturbance. Disturbances cause by motorized travel can cause elk to calve in less suitable sites and push wintering elk on to private lands, creating conflicts with livestock operators and other landowners. The IRA is winter and summer range for mule deer, with areas of winter concentrations. The DOW recognizes the IRA as overall range for mountain lions and black bear, as well as a fall concentration area for black bears. The IRA also contains overall range, winter concentrations, and production areas for wild turkey.

Another unique quality of this IRA is the existence of the Battlement Mesa bighorn sheep herd residing within the IRA. This herd exhibits characteristics unique to only this herd. This is a remnant historic bighorn sheep herd that is currently at a very low population level. They are physically small in size and stature and live at relatively low elevations compared to other herds within the state. There are many challenges facing this herd, including encroachment of timbered habitat due to years of fire suppression, inbreeding and lack of adequate water. Management prescriptions have been established to positively affect this herd. The continued management of the IRA as roadless would certainly benefit this bighorn sheep population.

Management recommendations: Housetop Mountain IRA should be maintained as a roadless area, and no new roads or

motorized trails be established. Construction of new roads or motorized trails in this area would result in the fragmentation of existing wildlife habitat. New roads and motorized trails would also increase the level of silt in the stream systems which serve as important habitat for numerous aquatic species. Although the terrain significantly limits road construction anyway, it is strongly recommended that no road development occur within this IRA.

HUNTER (75)

Hunter is a small IRA which lies adjacent to the Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness Area, Warren Lakes peat bogs, and Hunter Creek. It consists mainly of spruce-fir with some wet seeps and steep north facing slopes above Hunter Creek. It provides summer range habitat for mule deer, elk, and black bear. Small game species such as blue grouse and snowshoe hare also occupy the area. It lies above Colorado River cutthroat habitat in Hunter Creek. Due to the steep nature of the IRA, there is only one foot and horseback trail which crosses it. This trail receives heavy use during summer and fall.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trail or road construction

INDEPENDENCE B (81)

This is a very small IRA located at the top of Independence Pass. It contains primarily alpine tundra with alpine willows and some krumholz. It provides summer range for mule deer, elk, mountain goats, white-tailed ptarmigan, and lies within overall range and use by lynx in the Independence area.

There are no existing roads or trails within the IRA but it is adjacent to highway 82 and USFS trail 1996 which leads into the adjacent Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness Area. Public use is minimal except for right adjacent to the highway at the top of Independence Pass

Management recommendation: This IRA should remain roadless in order to protect the alpine tundra habitat. It is a fragile ecosystem that takes generations to recover from any disturbance

LOWER PINEY (12)

Lower Piney has areas of rolling valleys to very steep canyons; vegetation consists of spruce-fir, aspen, lodgepole pine, mountain shrubs, sagebrush, riparian and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, wild turkey, Colorado River cutthroat trout, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. This IRA contains extensive critical winter habitat for both deer and elk; winter range, severe winter range, winter concentration areas, and migration corridors. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Moose colonized this area on their own and use the IRA as overall range. Turkeys colonized the IRA from the Radium area and have since been supplemented with a transplant. Colorado River cutthroat trout are found in Piney River, Lava Creek and Elkhorn Park. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads and limited (2) system hiking trails. Illegal use by motorcycles and ATV's is moving elk and deer onto private lands early in the hunting season. The IRA has good access and provides excellent hunting and fishing with access by foot or horse. Due to the limited vehicle access and system trails the IRA provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting near roads yet also provides the ability to escape the roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness. The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA are 5.4 forested flora and fauna, 5.41 deer and elk winter range. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

MAMM PEAK (55)

The Mamm Peak IRA is surrounded by areas of relatively high disturbance and motorized use, and provides wildlife with an important refuge. Like the Housetop Mountain IRA, the Mamm Peak IRA is steep and rugged but the vegetation is very different supporting much more biomass and therefore a much greater array of wildlife species. This IRA is home to

very large numbers of mule deer, elk, bear, wild turkey, to name a few. The Battlement Reservoirs, Battlement Creek and Mamm Creek all support Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Throughout the IRA mule deer, elk and black bear are abundant from late spring to late fall. Mule deer follow the receding snow in the spring to the entire area fawning and raising their young before migrating to lower elevations in the fall. Elk follow the same pattern and remain throughout the winter at elevations up to 9000' if not driven further down by snow or human disturbance. Black bear spend the entire year between 7000' to 10,000' concentrating in the mountain shrub zone during the fall. The IRA is also mapped as potential Canada Lynx Habitat, and has been utilized by the species in the past. The roadless attributes of this IRA increase the potential for this species to not only visit the area, but inhabit it as well.

Management recommendations: The Mamm Peak IRA should be maintained as a roadless area, and no new roads or motorized trails be established into this area. It should be noted that the surrounding landscape, both public and private are experiencing tremendous amounts of natural gas development, and without the roadless characteristics of this IRA, impacts would be detrimental to many wildlife species. The solitude and naturalness of this area lends itself to an incredibly diverse wildlife ecosystem that allows for wildlife seclusion and production.

MCCLURE PASS (80)

This IRA is a small parcel located between the Raggeds Wilderness and HWY 133. The area serves as summer range for mule deer, elk, and mtn. goat. Some elk winter range is found at the lower elevations near Gunnison CR 3. A historical purple martin nesting area is located at the north end of the IRA near HWY 133 at McClure Pass. This is one of only a few similar sites known in Colorado. The IRA also contains potential lynx habitat, and lynx sightings have occurred in the area.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help prevent habitat fragmentation, provide summer solitude and maintain good quality hunting experience.

MORAPOS A (1a)

The Morapos A IRA provides essential habitat needs for wildlife species including, but not limited to: black bear, elk, mule deer, mountain lion, bald eagle, native cutthroat trout, as well as many avian and small mammal species. This IRA is currently rated as capable, but not available for the roadless designation by the White River National Forest.

Management Recommendation: Current management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species utilizing this area. No further restriction of motorized access is needed. Adding additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel would have negative impacts on this important elk migration corridor. Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated upon completion of such projects.

MORAPOS B (1b)

The Morapos B IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: elk, mule deer, black bear, Colorado River Native cutthroat trout, bald eagles, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health, productivity, and diversity of the habitat required by these wildlife species. . Construction of additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have negative impacts to migration, harvest, and production of the White River Elk Herd. This is the largest elk herd in the world with an estimated population of 37,900 animals. This same herd provides hunting opportunity for over 30,000 hunters. Elk hunting in northwest Colorado contributes substantially to the local economy. In addition, new road construction projects would likely have numerous negative impacts to aquatic habitats within this IRA and could jeopardize the survival of Colorado River Native cutthroat trout populations.

Management Recommendation: Current road management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area while still allowing for reasonable public access to enjoy these same species. No further restrictions of motorized access are needed. Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects.

MAROON EAST (79)

This is a very long, narrow, picturesque IRA which lies adjacent to Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area and Maroon Creek. The IRA contains good bighorn sheep habitat along the cliffs and avalanche chutes of the IRA. Elk, mule deer, and black bear also forage along the meadows and chutes.

Maroon Creek Road lies to the west of the creek and is heavily used once the road opens in the spring. There is a foot and horseback trail along the IRA. Most public use is along the trail and very seldom do people hike up the extremely steep hillside and ridge. Construction of any roads within the IRA is really not feasible and would impact the scenic quality visitors come to see in this valley.

Management recommendations: This area should be maintained as roadless with no new trail construction in order to protect bighorn sheep habitat and riparian values along Maroon Creek. Maintaining the existing trail should not impact wildlife due to its long historic use and access to wilderness area.

MARYLAND CREEK (31)

A vegetative management buffer may be necessary to provide protection of subdivisions near Silverthorne from wildfire. This IRA includes habitat that serves as overall range, winter range, production area, summer concentration area, and movement corridor for elk. This IRA includes habitat that serves as overall range and a migration area for mule deer. Northern goshawk and red-tailed hawks nest in this IRA. Moose and black bear frequently use the habitat in this IRA.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing IRA roadless designation.

MCFARLAND (78)

This IRA lies next to Aspen Mountain and Richmond Hill, McFarland Creek and the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area. It contains aspen, spruce-fir, open meadows, and riparian corridor along McFarland Creek. Its primary value is for elk production and mule deer and elk summer range/summer solitude. A variety of avian species including blue grouse inhabit the area. Black bear inhabit the area summer through fall.

There is one trail/old jeep road which traverses a portion of the IRA which is closed to motorized use. The area above the IRA receives significant public use yearlong making this IRA valuable for solitude and a buffer to the wilderness area. Although a portion of the IRA is mapped as elk severe winter range due to the aspect and snow depth, my experience in the last 5 years, does not appear to demonstrate the attributes of significant winter range.

Management recommendation: This IRA should remain roadless to protect elk production and summer solitude areas. Due to its varied habitat from aspen to meadows to spruce-fir and riparian, it has tremendous value for a variety of wildlife species.

MEADOW MOUNTAIN (40B)

Meadow Mountain has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.4 forested flora and fauna. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

MORMAN CREEK (64)

The Mormon IRA is located in Eagle and Pitkin counties and is composed of a variety of habitat types ranging from willowed riparian areas to lodgepole with spruce/fir. This IRA lies adjacent to Cunningham Creek, which has been established as a self-sustaining Colorado River Cutthroat fishery. Watersheds adjacent to the river should remain roadless in order to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and impacts to the river ecosystem. The USFS has found the IRA Woods Lake IRA capable and available for wilderness designation. Current management is for dispersed recreation and elk habitat.

Management Recommendations: The unfragmented extent of Mormon IRA provides significant and vital habitat for a variety of terrestrial and avian species. Unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health of the habitat used by these species. Areas adjacent to Cunningham Creek need to be preserved to protect a viable and sustaining Colorado River Cutthroat population. Therefore the IRA should remain as a roadless area.

MUD SPRINGS (40A)

Mud Springs has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, Colorado River cutthroat trout and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Cutthroat trout are found in the lower reaches of McCoy Creek. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.43 elk habitat. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

NO NAME (57)

No Name has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, high alpine meadows (tundra), scree fields, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, ptarmigan, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, bighorn sheep, moose and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to bighorn sheep, moose, pine marten, ptarmigan, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA is part of a bighorn sheep transplant to rebuild the historical bighorn sheep herd in the Holy Cross Wilderness area. Lynx have been documented in the IRA and provides a connection across the Continental Divide, one of the USFS management prescriptions is 5.5 forested landscape linkages. The IRA has no system trails and the majority of the summer hiking is cross country not on system trails. The lack of roads and trails in the area provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience. The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

NORTH ELK (7)

The North Elk IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: black bear, elk, wild turkey, mule deer, mountain lion, Colorado River Native cutthroat trout, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health and diversity of the habitat required by these wildlife species. This IRA is currently rated as capable, but not available for the roadless designation by the White River National Forest. Construction of additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have negative impacts to migration, harvest, and production of the White River Elk Herd and many other terrestrial wildlife species. In addition, new road construction projects would likely have many negative impacts (erosion and sedimentation) to the many high-quality aquatic habitats within this IRA and could jeopardize the survival of Colorado River Native cutthroat trout populations. Naturally reproducing Colorado River Native Cutthroat trout populations are currently thriving in all three forks of North Elk Creek in this IRA.

Management recommendation: It is recommended that current road management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area, and allow for the recovery of threatened/endangered wildlife species that could potentially utilize this area in the future. No further restriction of motorized access is needed in this relatively remote IRA. Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects.

NORTH INDEPENDENCE A (77)

North Independence A is a long and fairly narrow IRA which lies adjacent to Hunter Creek, Warren Lakes peat bogs, Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness Area, and Highway 82. It consists of aspen, spruce-fir, and mountain shrub habitat types. It provides summer range for mule deer and elk, elk winter range, and has an elk migration corridor which crosses it just east of Aspen. It also provides summer range and winter fall concentration area for black bear. Lynx have been utilizing some of the spruce-fir habitat above Highway 82 for winter foraging habitat. Colorado River cutthroat are found adjacent to the IRA in Hunter Creek.

The IRA contains several roads and trails in the northwest portion of the IRA in the Smuggler Mountain and Warren Lake area. There are some old roads and trails in this area which have been closed by the USFS but are still seeing use by motorcycles, ATVs, and mountain bikes. These roads/trails need to be physically closed with increased enforcement of the closures. The USFS prescription for much of this IRA is inclusion into the adjacent wilderness area

Management recommendation: This IRA should remain roadless with the existing roads and trails in the northwest portion of the IRA remain open in order to concentrate disturbance in this highly used area. No new roads or trails should be constructed. This IRA supports a variety of wildlife including lynx.

NORTH WOODY (71)

North Woody is a steep and rugged IRA containing mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and spruce-fir habitats. The northern portion supports winter range for mule deer and elk while the entire IRA supports black bear summer range and fall concentration areas. This IRA sits below Kobey Park which is a year round multiple use area with roads and trails and above private lands with rural residential development. The IRA provides quality big game hunting away from the roads and its associated disturbance.

Due to the step nature of the IRA, only a few foot and horseback trails exist. Public access is good from Kobey Park as well as from some trails which start from Woody Creek Road. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion, disturbance/displacement to wintering big game, and increased stress/disturbance during the summer

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help protect winter range values and maintain good quality hunting experience

PAGODA PEAK (2)

The Pagoda Peak IRA provides essential habitat needs for many wildlife species including, but not limited to: elk, mule deer, black bear, Colorado River Native cutthroat trout, bald eagles, as well as many avian and small mammal species. Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for maintaining the ecological health, productivity, and diversity of the

habitat required by these wildlife species. Construction of additional permanent roads or lifting current restrictions on motorized travel within this IRA would have negative impacts to migration, harvest, and production of the White River Elk Herd. This is the largest elk herd in the world with an estimated population of 37,900 animals. This same herd provides hunting opportunity for over 30,000 hunters. Elk hunting in northwest Colorado contributes substantially to the local economy. In addition, new road construction projects would likely have numerous negative impacts to aquatic habitats within this IRA and could jeopardize the survival of Colorado River Native cutthroat trout populations.

Management recommendation: It is recommended that current road management practices continue in this IRA. Restrictions currently in place are meeting the habitat needs of the species currently utilizing this area while still allowing for reasonable public access to enjoy these same species. No further restrictions of motorized access are needed. Temporary roads constructed for forest management activities such as prescribed fire, timber harvest, and mineral exploration should be obliterated and reclaimed with native vegetation upon completion of such habitat improvement projects.

PINEY LAKE (30)

Piney Lake has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, Colorado River cutthroat trout and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to moose, pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Moose colonized this IRA on their own and utilized the riparian areas for overall range. Cutthroat trout are found in Piney Lake, Piney River and Red Sandstone Creek. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.4 forested flora and fauna. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

PORCUPINE PEAK (35)

The Porcupine Peak IRA surrounds Arapaho Ski Area and in some cases, portions of the Ski Area are within the IRA boundary. From a management standpoint, roads will be allowed to maintain the ski area facilities. Porcupine Peak IRA supports mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk summer range, wolverine potential habitat, ptarmigan overall range, and boreal toad breeding sites.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing IRA roadless designation.

PTARMIGAN A (21A)

Ptarmigan A is located on a deer and elk migration corridor, provides deer and elk winter range, severe winter range, and production areas.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation.

PTARMIGAN B (21B)

The Ptarmigan B IRA does not have permanent or temporary roads, is located on a deer and elk migration corridor and deer and elk winter range. A Wilderness designation would further protect wildlife habitat, and continue to provide existing recreational opportunities.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation and include in the Ptarmigan Wilderness

Area. Summit County and the USFS recommended during the Forest Plan review that this IRA be included formally in the Ptarmigan Wilderness Area.

PTARMIGAN C (21C)

Ptarmigan C IRA does not have permanent or temporary roads, is located on a deer and elk migration corridor and deer and elk winter range. A Wilderness designation would further protect wildlife habitat, and continue to provide existing recreational opportunities. This IRA includes habitat that serves as overall range, severe winter range, production area, summer concentration area, and movement corridor for elk. This IRA includes habitat that serves as overall range, winter range, and migration corridor for mule deer.

Management recommendation: Maintain the roadless designation and include in the Ptarmigan Wilderness Area. Summit County and the USFS recommended during the Forest Plan review that this IRA be included formally in the Ptarmigan Wilderness Area.

PTARMIGAN HILL A (47A)

Ptarmigan Hill has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, high alpine meadows (tundra), mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, ptarmigan, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, ptarmigan, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. The southern and western edges of the IRA do contain some elk winter range. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Lynx have been documented in the IRA and one of the USFS management prescriptions 5.5 is forested landscape linkages. The IRA does not have any system roads within its borders but there are several system hiking trails. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

PTARMIGAN HILL B (47B)

This IRA contains elk summer range, a movement corridor, and production areas. It also has ptarmigan overall range and winter concentration areas, and has suitable habitat for lynx.

Management recommendation: Maintain the roadless designation with boundary adjustments. From a management standpoint, roads will be allowed to maintain the ski area facilities. An in-holding of about 135 acres has been acquired by the Forest Service and should be included in the IRA.

RED DIRT (8a)

The Red Dirt IRA is bounded on the west by the Flat Tops Wilderness area. Motorized use occurs to the north on USFS lands, as well as to the east and south on adjacent federal and private lands. This IRA provides essential habitat needs for mammals, herptiles and fish including but not limited to bighorn sheep, black bear, elk, mountain lion and mule deer. Red Dirt Creek also hosts a population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. Elk management in this area relies heavily on limited vehicular access to prevent the pushing of elk onto adjacent private lands. This can severely influence harvest success rates and therefore our ability to meet harvest objectives.

Management recommendation: Large, unbroken roadless areas are essential for preserving the ecological health and integrity of the habitat used by many wildlife species. Therefore, due to the amount of summer and fall motor vehicle recreation in areas adjacent to Red Dirt IRA as well as elk and native fish management concerns it is recommend that the roadless designation remain on this IRA.

RED TABLE (53a)

The Red Table IRA is located in Eagle county and is composed of a variety of habitat types ranging from willowed riparian areas to alpine scree fields. The IRA includes large areas of private property in holdings near Taylor Creek and Ruedi Creek. The USFS has found the Red Table IRA capable and available for wilderness designation. Current management is for dispersed recreation and elk habitat. This is a large and varied IRA which has multiple habitat types from mountain shrub, pinon-juniper, aspen, spruce-fir, Douglas fir. Numerous cirque lakes are found below the ridge of Red Table Mountain. Access is currently available throughout the IRA which allows dispersal of big game hunters, high quality hunting experiences, and a harvest to help meet population management objectives.

Management recommendations: This area possesses significant value as roadless. Maintaining as roadless will minimize habitat fragmentation, minimize disturbance and stress to winter ranges, production areas. It is currently managed as a proposed wilderness area, and we would recommend continuing this management

RENO MOUNTAIN (66)

The Reno Mountain IRA is mapped as elk winter range (the northwest corner- Alkali Creek), elk summer range and elk production area. It is also mapped as mule deer summer range and production area. The Reno Mountain IRA is also important habitat for black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey, and a wide variety of raptors and other birds. It is also potential lynx habitat and in fact at least one lynx has definitely been spotted just north of the National Forest property line in that area.

Management recommendation: This IRA should continue to be managed as a roadless area. There is sufficient access along the borders of the IRA to provide for harvest goals and recreational opportunities. Hunting season traffic has always been high in this general area and in recent years recreational traffic has increased significantly. The Reno Mountain IRA provides an important haven for the above mentioned wildlife necessary for production and survival.

RYAN GULCH (38)

Ryan Gulch IRA surrounds approximately 2,500 single and multifamily units in Wilderrest and Mesa Cortina subdivisions. The IRA has five formal trailheads, and many social walking and biking trails. No permanent or temporary roads exist on the IRA at this time. Many species of wildlife use the drainages on either side of the subdivisions, but a strong need exists for vegetative management to improve wildlife habitat in mature, pine beetle infested lodgepole pine, and to reduce the potential for damaging wildfires in the area. Public safety for a large number of residents and visitors is a major consideration in this IRA. New roads for vegetative management should be obliterated when the prescribed work is completed.

Management recommendation: Maintain existing IRA roadless designation.

SALT CREEK (42)

Salt Creek is an IRA located approximately 1 mile northwest of the Holy Cross Wilderness Area and is composed of mountain shrub, lodgepole pine, aspen, and spruce fir habitats. The IRA is also located close to several large residential developments. The lower elevations of this IRA provide winter range for both mule deer and elk along with transitional and summer habitats for these species. Black bear range throughout this area with high quality forage being available. The area's current access allows for the dispersal of hunters throughout the IRA, quality hunting experiences, and the harvest of deer and elk at a level that helps meet the Division of Wildlife's objectives.

While current access provides the opportunity for dispersed recreation throughout the IRA, it also allows for large unbroken tracts of wildlife habitat to remain intact. Additional roads into the IRA, whether originating on public or private lands, will lead to additional stress on wildlife using the area and the disturbance and subsequent dispersal of wildlife onto t lower elevation private lands..

Management Recommendations: The access into this IRA should remain at the current management level. Construction of new roads or trails, whether originating on public or from private lands, should be monitored and physically obliterated or closed when discovered ensuring that winter habitat on public lands remains available and that the area continues to provide quality hunting experiences.

SLOAN'S PEAK (61)

This is a large IRA containing varied habitat types lying between the Roaring Fork River and Frying Pan River and Ruedi Reservoir. It has been assessed high by the USFS for its variety and abundance of wildlife. It also provides substantial high quality hunting and fishing opportunities. There are a few nonmotorized trails which provide access throughout the IRA. The Kobey Park area lies immediately adjacent to this IRA providing sufficient motorized opportunities and access.

This IRA provides important winter range for mule deer and elk; in fact, a cooperative habitat project resulted in the installation of a guzzler to benefit big game as well as small game. Rocky Fork provides native cutthroat populations and the world renowned Frying Pan River borders this IRA on the north.

Maintaining this area as roadless is important if wildlife, fisheries, and habitat values are to be protected. Roadless values will reduce habitat fragmentation, minimize sedimentation, and minimize disturbance, stress, and displacement of big game. New roads or trails may impact elk production areas resulting in decreased reproductive success, decreased hunter success, and reduced hunter satisfaction and quality of back country experience.

Management recommendation: This area should remain as roadless in order to protect its rich diversity of wildlife and habitat values including big game winter range, severe winter range, and production areas.

SPRADDLE CREEK (29A)

Spraddle Creek A has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, aspen, lodgepole pine, and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, bighorn sheep, rocky mountain goat, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. Rocky mountain goats and bighorn sheep use this IRA as overall habitat. Winter use of the IRA is limited to pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx because of the high elevation. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 1.2 recommended wilderness. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

SPRADDLE CREEK (29B)

Spraddle Creek B has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, moose, bighorn sheep, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. Bighorn sheep use the south east corner for winter range, severe winter range, winter concentrations areas, and production areas and the rest of the IRA as overall range. Because of its high elevation winter use in the rest of the IRA is limited to moose, pine marten, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. In the summer the IRA provides high quality habitat for both elk and deer; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Moose colonized this IRA on their own and utilized the riparian areas for overall range. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat. The IRA is significant for its lack of roads which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance.

The IRA is adjacent to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness. The USFS management prescriptions for the IRA are 5.42 bighorn sheep habitat, 5.4 forested flora and fauna. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help

maintain high wildlife values and quality hunting experience.

SWEETWATER A (15A)

Sweetwater IRA is split into separate IRA's: # 15A Sweetwater A and #15B Sweetwater B. The Sweetwater A IRA #15A, has areas of rolling hills to very steep slopes, alpine meadows, Englemanns spruce, subalpine fir, Douglas-fir, aspen, gambles oak and grassland meadows, riparian areas, and grass-shrub steppe.

The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, snowshoe hare, bald eagles nesting and winter range adjacent to Sweetwater Lake, osprey nesting and adjacent to Sweetwater Lake, and Colorado River Cutthroat trout, as well as other wildlife. There is potential lynx habitat in this IRA. In the summer the IRA provides quality deer and elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Additionally, this area is vital to sustaining severe and critical winter range, as well as areas of winter concentrations for both deer and elk.

The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.4 Flora and Fauna Habitats. Additionally, the northeast portion of the IRA has a prescription of 5.41 Deer and Elk Winter Range. The far northeast portion of the IRA has a prescription of 1.2 Recommended Wilderness and adjoins the Flattops Wilderness to the north and to the east the BLM Wildlife Study Area (WSA) around Hack Lake, and IRA 8A Red Dirt. The potential for a large tract of roadless to exist unfragmented between the two IRA's and the wilderness would lend credence to this prescription as suitable for the area.

The IRA has a few system trails, however the majority of the summer hiking is cross country, not on designated trails. Due to the limited vehicle access and system trails the IRA provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife. The portions of the area adjacent to the IRA is heavily impacted year around by motorized recreation; including OHV's and snow machines. The IRA currently provides some degree of solitude for wildlife in an area highly impacted by motorized recreation. Establishing this area as roadless, will allow for increased habitat diversity for a variety of wildlife species. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance. The IRA is significant for its lack of highly traveled roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless the emphasis: no new roads should be constructed in this IRA, and existing roads or user created routes should be decommissioned and deconstructed to provide quality wildlife habitat. Any temporary roads built to meet management objectives should also be deconstructed after the life of the project.

SWEETWATER B (15B)

Sweetwater IRA is split into separate IRA's: # 15A Sweetwater A and #15B Sweetwater B. The Sweetwater B IRA #15B, has areas of rolling hills to very steep slopes, alpine meadows, Englemanns spruce, subalpine fir, Douglas-fir, aspen, gambles oak and grassland meadows, and riparian areas.

The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, snowshoe hare. There is potential lynx habitat in this IRA. In the summer the IRA provides quality elk habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. Additionally, in the summer the southern portion of the IRA provides quality bighorn sheep habitat; summer concentration areas, summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The USFS management prescription for the IRA is 5.4 Flora and Fauna Habitats.

The IRA has a few system trails, however the majority of the summer hiking is dispersed, not on designated trails. The lack of roads and trails in the area provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

The IRA has several authorized and unauthorized roads within its boundaries. The area adjacent to the IRA is heavily impacted year around by motorized recreation; including OHV's and snow machines. The IRA currently provides some degree of solitude for wildlife in an area highly impacted by motorized recreation. Establishing this area as roadless, will allow for increased habitat diversity for a variety of wildlife species. The IRA provides quality big game and small game hunting away from roads and its associated disturbance. The IRA is significant for its lack of highly traveled roads and trails which provides excellent solitude for the abundant wildlife.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction to help maintain high wildlife values and a quality hunting experience. Any existing roads or user created routes should be decommissioned to help provide quality wildlife habitat. In addition, included are suggested management recommendations which differ from existing USFS WRNF Plan:

- 1) IRA's Deep Creek (#23) and Sweetwater B (#15B) should be combined into one roadless area. The current delineation of the two separate IRA's allows for a narrow section of the area between the Deep Creek canyon (IRA #23) and Ballixsburg Spring and Short Creek Springs (IRA #15B) to remain roaded. This connection fragments this potentially larger more appropriate roadless area. Combining these two roadless areas: Deep Creek IRA #23- the northeast portion of the IRA, and Sweetwater B IRA #15B - the southeast corner of the IRA will maintain connectivity on a larger scale. Further fragmentation could have a negative impact on the landscape scale movements and health of all wildlife species in the area. Roadless areas that are adjacent to each other play a vital role in providing connected ecosystems and habitat for wildlife in Colorado.

TENDERFOOT MOUNTAIN (34)

The Tenderfoot IRA is located within elk winter range, production area, severe winter range, summer concentration area, a migration corridor, and a resident population of elk. It also contains ptarmigan overall range, winter range, and moose habitat and potential wolverine habitat. The Tenderfoot Mountain IRA is part of the forested landscape linkage corridor linking northern forested areas to southern forested areas. The Tenderfoot IRA provides movement areas for wildlife species such as mule deer, black bear, moose, and lynx.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation

TEN MILE (46)

This IRA contains elk summer range and production areas. It also has ptarmigan overall range and winter concentration areas, and has documented movement of lynx through the IRA.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation. Summit County and the Forest Service have recommended the addition of about 1,200 acres to the north of the IRA to about Mount Royal, and about 1,300 to the south of the IRA to about Mayflower Gulch for inclusion in the Ten Mile IRA.

THOMPSON CREEK (63)

The Thompson Creek IRA is an approximately 18,500 acre tract of land comprised mostly of aspen-meadow and spruce-fir type vegetation. The area contains several large elk production areas near Middle Thompson and South Branch of Middle Thompson Creeks. There is some elk winter range located on the eastern side of the IRA near Lake Ridge and Jerome Park. North Thompson and Middle Thompson Creeks host a variety of sport fish including Colorado River Cutthroat trout. Fragmentation of the area with new roads could impact negatively on the overall health of wildlife in this area

Management recommendation: This area should remain as roadless in order to protect its rich diversity of wildlife and habitat values including big game winter range, elk summer concentration and production areas

TIGIWON (50)

Tigiwon has areas of rolling valleys to very steep slopes and high ridges containing spruce-fir, high alpine meadows (tundra) mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, riparian habitat and grassland meadows. The IRA supports abundant wildlife; elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, blue grouse, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and lynx. Due to its high elevation winter wildlife use is limited to pine marten, ptarmigan, blue grouse, snowshoe hare and lynx. The southern edge of the IRA does provide some elk winter range. In the summer the IRA provides high quality elk habitat; summer range, production areas, and migration corridors. The IRA does contain potential lynx habitat.

The IRA is adjacent to the Holy Cross Wilderness. One of the USFS management prescriptions for the IRA is 5.4 forested flora and fauna. Additional roads would lead to increased erosion and sediment impacts on the aquatic habitats

and displacement, and increased stress/disturbance on wildlife during critical summer use.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help maintain wildlife values.

TREASURE MOUNTAIN (84)

This IRA lies adjacent to the Raggeds Wilderness area. The area is comprised of mostly alpine tundra, rocky outcroppings and spruce-fir. The area contains elk and mule deer summer range, mtn. goat summer range, as well as white-tailed ptarmigan habitat. The area also contains possible lynx denning and winter habitat. Lynx radio collar locations have been documented in the area.

Management recommendations: This IRA should remain roadless with no new trails or road construction which will help protect summer range and solitude for deer, elk, and mtn. goat. Proposed wilderness designation should be carried forward.

WEST LAKE CREEK (43)

West Lake Creek is a small IRA which shares its southern boundary with Holy Cross Wilderness Area and its northern boundary with a residential development, Cordillera. The IRA plays an essential role as the habitat link between the dedicated wildlife migration corridors from Cordillera to the high summer habitat in the Holy Cross Wilderness area. The area consists of lodgepole pine, aspen, mountain shrub, and spruce-fir habitat types. The IRA serves as transitional and summer range for both mule deer and elk, summer range for black bear, and has been determined to be suitable for lynx foraging and denning. Current access into the area is limited with seasonal restrictions in place to protect wildlife using the area from unnecessary disturbance and stress during critical time periods.

West Lake Creek IRA is an important linkage area for wildlife wintering on private property and transitioning back to the higher elevation lands. Additional roads into the area have the potential for the disruption of the movement and use of this area.

Management recommendation: This IRA should remain with the current access management system that is in place. New construction of roads and trails from private or public lands should be monitored and physically closed and rehabilitated to native vegetations.

WEST BRUSH CREEK (45)

This IRA is located southwest of the town of Eagle and approximately 3 miles from the Holy Cross Wilderness Area. Vegetation ranges from mountain shrub, aspen, lodgepole pine, and spruce-fir through the unit. The IRA provides winter range, transitional and summer range for mule deer and elk. The area is located in close proximity to several developments. Current access in the IRA allows for the dispersal of hunters and other users throughout the unit while still providing large tracts of unbroken habitat for the wildlife using the area. The area receives a high amount of hunting pressure and harvest from this area is good. Reintroduced Merriam's turkeys are establishing themselves throughout this area with birds wintering on the private property adjacent to the IRA and moving onto the area as weather allows and utilizing the area for the remainder of the year. Development of new roads and trails in the IRA will disturb, stress and disperse wildlife using the area. If wildlife are dispersed to lower elevations the result will be animals on private property where they are inaccessible to the public for hunting and harvest. Winter recreation in the IRA can be achieved but attention needs to be made to avoid areas that wildlife are utilizing to survive.

Management Recommendation: Maintain the existing authorized access routes. Develop winter travel routes away from wildlife use areas. Unauthorized new roads and trails should be physically closed and revegetated with native species.

WILLIAMS FORK (9)

The Williams Fork IRA is located on a deer and elk migration corridor and deer and elk winter range, and elk severe

winter range, and winter concentration area. Greater sage grouse use the Williams Fork IRA as winter range, and there is potential habitat for a lek.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation. In the past few years, an in-holding of 320 acres of State Trust Land had been acquired by the USFS, it would be appropriate to include this parcel within the existing IRA roadless designation surrounding the parcel

WILLOW CREEK (32)

A vegetative management buffer may be necessary to provide protection of subdivisions near Silverthorne from wildfire. This IRA contains elk winter range, transitional range, and production areas. It also supports moose and black bear that frequent the subdivisions near Willow IRA.

Management recommendation: Maintain the current IRA roadless designation.

WOODS LAKE (52)

Woods Lake IRA is located south of Eagle and northeast of Meredith and Thomasville in Eagle and Pitkin Counties. It is adjacent to Holy Cross Wilderness. Elevation ranges from 8,800 feet to 12,050 feet. This IRA is composed of a variety of habitat types ranging from willowed riparian areas to alpine scree fields. The IRA includes large areas of private property in holdings near Woods Lake. Two 10th Mountain huts, Peter Estin and Polar Star are located within the IRA. Fulford Cave also lies within the IRA boundaries. The current permitting and reservation system of the hut system and commercial use of Fulford Cave need to be maintained. Hat Creek is a designated Colorado River Cutthroat stream that needs to remain protected. The USFS has found the IRA Woods Lake IRA capable and available for wilderness designation. Current management is for dispersed recreation and elk habitat.

Management Recommendations: With the unique mix of large expanses of unfragmented habitat and private land in holdings, this IRA requires unique management. The existing roadless areas should be preserved to insure that the large variety of wildlife using the IRA retain the high quality habitat that is currently present. Additional roads will add stress and dispersal of animals out of the area. Hat Creek requires specific attention with no new or improved access points to the stream to preserve a sustaining Colorado River Cutthroat population. Improved access will lead to degradation of the riparian habitat which will effect the stream and trout population. Access is currently available throughout the IRA which allows dispersal of big game hunters, high quality hunting experiences, and a harvest to help meet population management objectives.