

## Special Areas

Special areas are areas within the NFS designated for their unique or special characteristics. These areas include wilderness, wild and scenic river corridors, research natural areas, and other areas. Some of these areas are statutorily designated. Other areas may be designated through plan development, amendment, revision, or through a separate administrative process with an appropriate NEPA analysis (36 CFR 219). Appropriate plan components are provided for existing designations and recommended areas. This may include desired conditions, management objectives, and guidelines. The following section addresses the special areas for the Dixie National Forest and outlines a description of the area, the desired conditions, and management strategy.

### STATUTORILY DESIGNATED AREAS

#### Designated Wilderness

Wilderness Area	Acerage
Ashdown Gorge	7,043
Box-Death Hollow	25,751
Pine Valley Mountains	50,232

#### *Desired Condition of Designated Wilderness Areas*

Designated wilderness is managed and protected, for the plants and animals that live there and their habitat, the preservation of large, intact ecosystems, clean air and water, and primitive recreation opportunities. Natural ecological processes are dominant. Ecosystems are influenced by natural process with little or no human disturbance. Native fish and wildlife species are featured and the habitat needs of species-at-risk receive protective measures where needed.

Designated wilderness areas are managed and their values protected according to the 1964 Wilderness Act. Wilderness is managed as a scarce resource, where wilderness-dependent activities are favored when managing wilderness use. Wilderness management work emphasizes practices that have the least discernible impact on the land. These are verified through the minimum tool criteria at the Regional Office. People visiting wilderness within the National Forest find opportunities for exploration, solitude, risk, and challenge. Human use of the wilderness is provided while preserving wilderness character. The adverse impacts of human use are controlled and reduced through education and minimum regulation.

Solitude and a low level of encounters with other users or evidence of past use is an essential part of the social setting. Human travel, though not restricted to, is principally on system trails.

Popular campsites show evidence of repeated but acceptable levels of use. Minimum impact camping techniques will be encouraged.

Past resource management activities have been managed in such a way that current human use has left only limited site-specific evidence of their passing. Areas with evidence of unacceptable levels of past use will be rehabilitated and the affected areas restored. Range allotments with authorized permanent structures may be present within the area. Scientific and other authorized practices utilizing non-motorized equipment, but requiring up to season long occupancy are compatible.

Management of designated wilderness is guided by individual wilderness plans prepared subsequent to Congressional designation.

### Recommended Wilderness

Areas recommended to Congress for wilderness consideration are managed to maintain existing wilderness character. Activities in recommended wilderness do not compromise the wilderness character or reduce the area's potential for wilderness designation.

Generally, all current activities will continue until Congressional action on the recommendation. Specifically, mountain biking and snowmobiling will be prohibited in these recommended wilderness areas with one exception (mountain biking will continue to be allowed in the Cottonwood area).<sup>1</sup>

Name of Area	Size in Acres	Area Type
Ashdown NW	1,600	Recommended Addition to Ashdown Wilderness
Cottonwood	7,000	Recommended Wilderness
Pine Valley North	17,500	Recommended Addition to Pine Valley Wilderness
Sand Creek	700	Recommended Addition to Box Death Hollow Wilderness

### Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers

River segments and their corridors that are eligible as Wild and Scenic Rivers are managed to retain their free-flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values. (For additional details see: Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report, 2004.)

Eligible Segment	Length of Segment (miles)	Outstanding Remarkable Values
North Fork Virgin River	1.5	Scenic, geological, recreational
East Fork Boulder Creek	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, fish
Slickrock Canyon	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, cultural, ecological

<sup>1</sup> The Dixie may want to discuss this point about snowmobiling and mountain biking further for the following reasons. 1. This is not consistent with the Fishlake NF Recommended Wilderness DC. 2. The Dixie has greater concern about mountain bikes adjacent to existing wilderness. 3. Restricting current use on trails was the subject of a successful lawsuit on the recent Uinta NF plan.

Cottonwood Canyon	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, cultural
The Gulch	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, cultural
Steep Creek	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, ecological
Pine Creek	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, geological, ecological
Mamie Creek	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, geological, fish, wildlife, cultural, ecological, historical
Death Hollow Creek	<i>From 1998 Interagency analysis</i>	Scenic, recreational, wildlife, cultural, ecological, paleontological

## ADMINISTRATIVELY DESIGNATED AREAS

### Backcountry Areas

Backcountry areas are typically undeveloped landscapes that are natural appearing, with little evidence of recent human-caused disturbance. These areas allow opportunities for solitude and self-reliance. Ecological processes such as natural succession, fire, and insect and disease, are allowed to function with some human influence. While non-motorized recreation travel experiences are common, there may be some areas where existing motorized travel is allowed to continue.

*Backcountry Area Suitability Summary Table*

Name of Area	Size (acres)	Snowmobiles?	Est. Miles of access within		Mtn. Bikes?	Rx Fire or Wildland Fire <sup>2</sup>
			Motorized	Non-motorized		
Deep Creek	42,000	Yes	NA <sup>3</sup>	NA	OK	OK
Fishhook	11,400	Yes	NA	NA	OK	OK
Little Creek	14,300	Yes	NA	NA	OK	OK
Long Neck	33,100	No	NA	NA	OK	OK
Oak Creek	18,500	Yes	NA	NA	OK	OK
Henderson W	11,300	Yes	NA	NA	OK	OK

Backcountry areas are identified as special areas to highlight the non-motorized recreation opportunities (See Figure xx). Although these are not the only areas of the forest that provide non-motorized opportunities, these are areas that offer unique

<sup>2</sup> This is probably accurate. Need to double check to identify any exceptions.

<sup>3</sup> Need to track this data down.

opportunities, characteristics, destination attractions, or have otherwise developed a “sense of place”. The backcountry areas will also be used to help prioritize future investment for enhancement of non-motorized recreation.

### *Desired Conditions*

Backcountry areas are characterized by a predominantly natural-appearing environment where there is a moderate to high probability of solitude. Recreation opportunities generally require a high degree of self-reliance, and pose a moderate to high degree of risk. Although there may be some evidence of other land uses, there is a high probability of experiencing isolation from the sounds and sights of man. Structures are rare, but may include rustic shelters, bridges and signs, and primitive sanitary facilities.

Generally, backcountry areas are managed to meet the physical, managerial, and social settings consistent with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum descriptions for semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) recreation. They provide a wide variety of dispersed recreation opportunities and settings. Natural processes are the primary agents for vegetative change. Remote habitat for native or naturalized species of game and non-game wildlife is provided consistent with the natural vegetation.

Non-motorized recreation opportunities are featured. Trails and closed roads provide abundant opportunities for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Limited motorized access is provided to trail heads and other access points. Mountain biking is restricted to existing designated trails.

### Deep Creek

The Deep Creek Backcountry area is a large (42,000 acres) non-motorized area on the Powell RD. The area contains the watersheds for Deep Creek, Cottonwood Creek, and Deer Creek. Cottonwood Peak and Mount Dutton are near the western edge of this area. The area contains several popular trails including the Mt. Dutton trail, North Cottonwood Creek trail, and the Mountain Springs trail. These trails are most often used by horse riders.

### Fishhook<sup>4</sup>

The Fishhook Backcountry area forms the southeastern boundaries of Bryce Canyon National Park. The area is shaped a little like a fish hook, hence its name. The area features portions of the Grande View trail and helps to support some of the Parks’ management goals.

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<sup>4</sup> “The Fishhook backcountry area forms the southeastern boundaries of Bryce Canyon National Park. The area is shaped a little like a fishhook, hence its name. One of the major purposes of the Bryce Canyon National Park is protection of its unique scenic features and over 1.5 million visitors annually visit for this purpose. The Fishhook backcountry area is seen by these visitors as a backdrop, and protection of this area is critical to maintaining the values of the park and visitor experience.” – Language suggestion from Bryce Canyon NP

Little Creek

The Little Creek Backcountry area is on the northern edge of the Cedar City RD. The area features Sandy Peak, Blue Meadows, and Little Creek Peak. Access to the area is provided by a number of low-standard 4WD roads. The area is popular for its semi-primitive hunting opportunities.

Longneck

The Longneck Backcountry area is non-motorized area on the eastern edge of the forest, east of Highway 12 and adjacent to the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. The area is rugged and steep with deep dissected canyons. The area contains portions of the Slickrock Trail.

Oak Creek

The Oak Creek Backcountry area is non-motorized area on the eastern edge of the forest, east of Highway 12 and adjacent to Capital Reef National Park. The area is rugged and steep with deep dissected canyons. The area contains portions of the Slickrock Trail and the Oak Creek trail that drops into the Park. The area also helps to compliment the Park Service management goals in the southern portions of Capital Reef National Park.

Henderson W

Henderson Backcountry area is a rugged area just northeast of Bryce Canyon National Park. This area features some of the same geologic formations as the park. The area features Henderson point, the Henderson Canyon trail, and Burro Canyon trail.

**Municipal Water Sources**

Figure xx displays the known water sources for culinary and municipal water supplies. Those sources are to be protected according to the provisions within the Utah State Source Protection Plans. *Include url reference here.*

**Botanical and Geologic Areas**

Name of Area	Acres	Area Type	Snowmobiles ?	Mountain Bikes?	RX Fire or Wildland Fire
Lavabeds 1	3,200	Geologic			
Red Canyon North	15,100	Geologica/ Botanical			
Red Canyon South	5,600	Geological/ Botanical			

Desired conditions for geologic areas emphasize protection of the geologic resources for which the area is valued. Desired conditions for botanical areas emphasize protection of the botanical resources for which the area is valued. Secondary emphasis for these areas is allowed for public appreciation of the botanical resources and the geologic conditions or for research of these features.

Lavabeds 1

The Lavabeds geologic area is large area of relatively young lava on the Cedar City RD. Within the area is Timbered Cone RNA.

Red Canyon North

The Red Canyon North Geological/Botanical area is on the west side of the Powell RD just north of Highway 12. The area includes unique geologic and botanical features. A number of locally endemic plant species live in this area. The area also features the Cassidy, Casto, Rich, Losee, Arches, Birds Eye, Photo, and Pink Ledges trails.

Red Canyon South

The Red Canyon South Geological/Botanical area is on the west side of the Powell RD just south of Highway 12. The area includes unique geologic and botanical features. A number of locally endemic plant species live in this area. The area also features the Thunder Mountain, Castle Bridge, Tunnel, Buckhorn, Grandview, and the Golden Wall trails.

Potential Additions to Botanical or Geologic Areas

In 1984 the Leeds Canyon area on the Pine Valley Ranger District was proposed as a potential RNA. The Leeds Canyon area, approximately 1,100 acres in size, is the only known location of evergreen broad-sclerophyll (hard leaf) chaparral in the state of Utah. An updated evaluation is needed to determine if the Leeds Canyon area still retains the natural character for designation as an RNA considering part of the area was burned in 1986 and seeded with non-native grasses. Initially the area may be designated as a botanical area with potential for future designation as an RNA after further evaluation and consideration.

**Other Study Areas**

Side Hollow Ponderosa Pine Provenance Study, Escalante Ranger District

An area set up as a garden study for ponderosa pine. Garden studies gather plants from various geographic locations and grow them at a common location to compare growth features, flowering periods, and other factors to help establish or refine seed transfer guidelines. There are ?? families of ponderosa pine from southern Utah, and ?? at this location.

**Forest Service Scenic Byway**

- Panguitch scenic byway (Forest Road 36)
- Markagunt scenic byway (Highway 14)
- Brian Head scenic byway (Highway 143)

**National Scenic Byway**

- Highway 12 scenic byway – All American Highway

**Research Natural Areas (RNAs) of the Dixie NF**

<i>Browse RNA</i>	Pine Valley District
	Established: November 20, 1998

<i>Timbered Cone RNA</i>	Cedar City District
	Established: December 18, 1990
<i>Red Canyon RNA</i>	Powell District
	Established: May 5, 1987
<i>Upper Sand Creek RNA</i>	Escalante District
	Established: November 20, 1998
<i>Table Cliff RNA</i>	Escalante District
	Established: July 24, 1991

### *Desired Conditions for RNAs*

Research natural areas (RNA's) are part of a national network of ecological areas designated in perpetuity for research and education and/or to maintain biological diversity on National Forest System lands. Research natural areas are for non-manipulative research, observation, and study. They also may assist in implementing provisions of special acts, such as the Endangered Species Act and the monitoring provisions of the National Forest Management Act.

Research natural areas are "a physical or biological unit in which current natural conditions are maintained insofar as possible. These conditions are ordinarily achieved by allowing natural physical and biological processes to prevail without human intervention. However, under unusual circumstances, deliberate manipulation may be utilized to maintain the unique feature that the Research Natural Area was established to protect." (Federal Committee on Ecological Reserves, 1977.)

### *Objectives and Management Guidelines*

Management direction for RNA's is outlined in the Forest Service Manual at FSM 4063. This direction includes objectives and guidelines for management. Snowmobiles, mountain bikes, and prescribed fire are generally unsuitable in RNAs. Wildland Fire Use is a suited use.

### **National Recreation Trails**

The Dixie NF has one designated national recreation trails and one proposed.

- Cascade Falls National Recreation Trail
- Great Western Trail (Recommended)

### **Description of Changes from Version 1.0 to 2.0**

- Edited for clarity
- The use of mountain bikes and snowmobiles has been clarified.
- Column on ORV's for Eligible WSR has been added.
- Language on backcountries has been changes to depict intentions and uses. This is also reflected in a suitability summary table. Unlisted uses (e.g. grazing) that are consistent with desired conditions (or forest-wide suitability) are suited.
- The table about botanical and geological areas has been expanded to better describe suited uses (I have a glitch in my computer – mountain biking and fire use boxes should say OK, snowmobiling boxes should read NO). Both Red Canyon North and Red Canyon South are changed to geological/botanical areas.
- Additional comments that were missed in the first pass through from the Powell RD were incorporated into this version.

### **Additional Anticipated Changes**

- **Adjustment to boundaries for individual areas based on MDP comments, field trips, discussions with cooperating agencies, internal workshops, changing desired conditions (e.g. backcountry).**
- Future meetings internally and externally on ROS, SMS, Special Areas, Geographic Area management and direction, and additional comments we may receive in the near future may also change our direction.