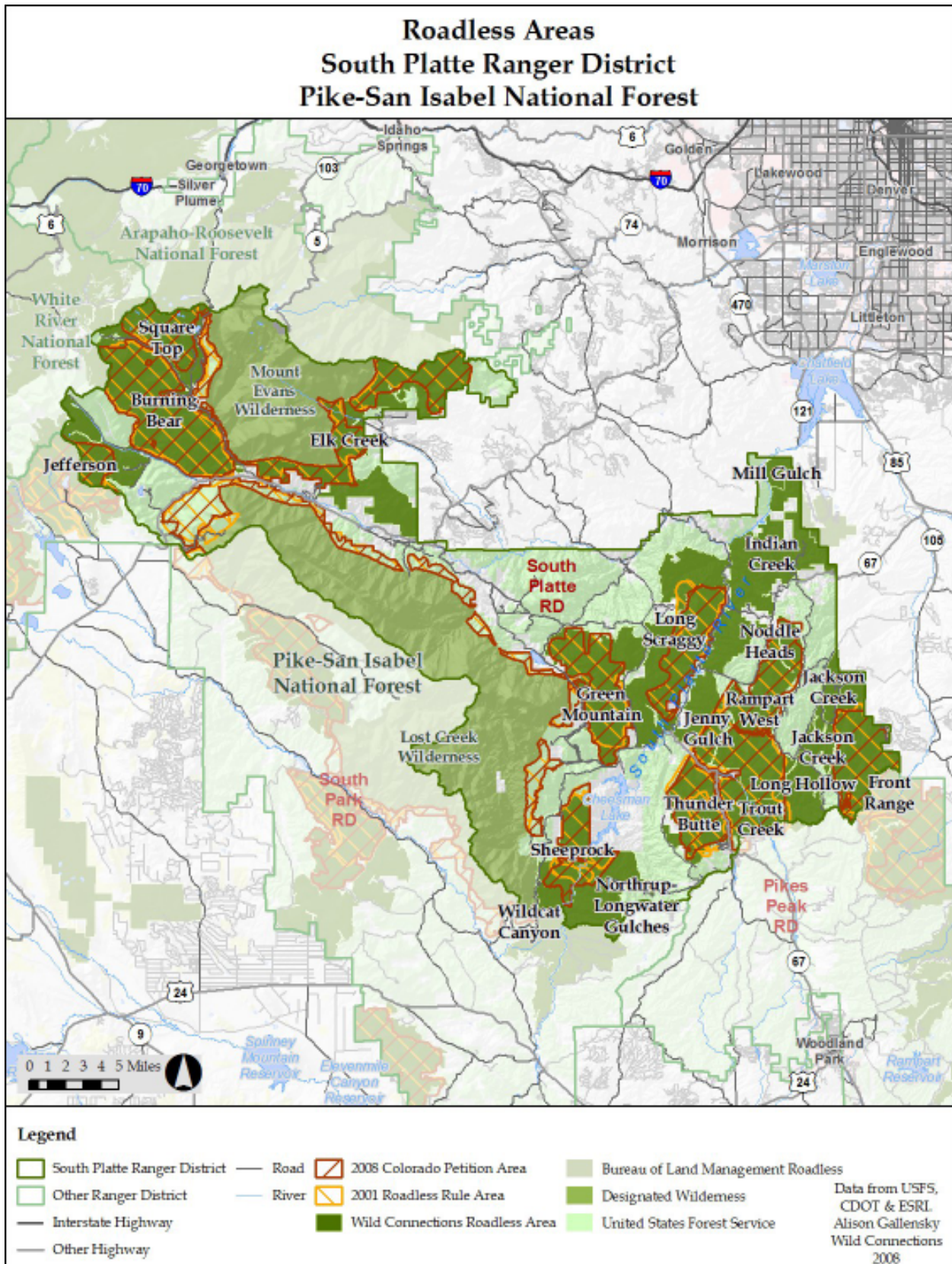


7. South Platte Ranger District



USFS Roadless Areas

Burning Bear
 Elk Creek
 Green Mountain
 Long Scraggy
 Rampart West
 Sheep Rock
 Square Top
 Thunder Butte
 Trout Creek

Additional areas recommended for the Roadless Inventory

Indian Creek
 Mill Gulch
 Noddle Heads
 Northrup-Longwater Gulches

Maps for each Roadless Area display these boundaries: the extent of the area that Wild Connections found in field surveys shown in dark green; the USFS Inventoried Roadless Area of 2001 shown as a yellow crosshatch; the proposed 2008 Forest Service boundary shown as a red crosshatch; and in some cases contiguous roadless BLM land shown with a black outline.

Map Legend

Legend				
South Platte Ranger District	Road	2008 Colorado Petition Area	Bureau of Land Management Roadless	Data from USFS, CDOT & ESRL Alison Gallensky Wild Connections 2008
Other Ranger District	River	2001 Roadless Rule Area	Designated Wilderness	
Interstate Highway	Wild Connections Roadless Area	United States Forest Service		
Other Highway				

Burning Bear Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Burning Bear's wetlands and riparian zones, especially along Burning Bear, Buno, and Geneva Creeks on the east side, are tangled with willows and other undergrowth. Beaver construct their dams in the lower reaches of the creeks, and the ponds abound with small nonnative trout. Burning Bear, along with Square Top to the north, effectively extends the Mt. Evans Wilderness, which is directly to the east across the Guanella Pass road.

Location and Boundaries

Burning Bear is in Park County just north of Grant and lies on the ridge between Geneva Creek and the North Fork of the South Platte River. It is bounded by Highway 285 on the south, the North Fork of the South Platte on the west and south, and the Geneva Creek road on the north. Only the Guanella Pass road, recently reconstructed, separates it from Mount Evans Wilderness on the east.

Nearly all of the RA was deemed roadless under the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.



Buno Creek is one of the rich riparian areas on the east side of Burning Bear. Photo Jean C. Smith

Burning Bear Roadless Area

USFS Name: Burning Bear



Ecological Values

Habitat is predominantly lodgepole pine in the south, Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir in the higher forested elevations, and alpine tundra and rock in the north near the Continental Divide, with some areas of limber pine, ponderosa pine, and aspen. There are significant wetlands, especially in Geneva Basin where Burning Bear Creek, Bruno Creek, and Geneva Creek produce a mix of willow carrs and wet meadows. CNHP lists several significant plant communities and rare plants: two sedges, five draba species, Porter feathergrass, Nangoon berry, and tundra buttercup. Fens and rare iron fens are found near Geneva town site.

Black bear frequent the roadless area. Elk are found across the RA, with elk winter range on the southern end. There are two large elk calving areas in the north and south central parts, as well as a large migration corridor from the south end of Burning Bear across US 285 into South Park. Mule deer also range across the RA in the summer and concentrate along Highway 285 in the winter. There is a small bighorn sheep lambing area near Burning Bear Creek, although the main bighorn sheep concentrations are in the adjacent Mount Evans Wilderness. Mountain goats are also found in the higher elevations in summer. Lynx habitat is found across the forested part of the RA with denning habitat scattered throughout. Radio collared lynx have been located in the Guanella Pass area, which is an important lynx linkage between the Pike-San Isabel and the Arapaho forest to the north. Historical records of greenback cutthroat trout are listed in Geneva Creek and its tributaries, but they have apparently succumbed to the acidic waters from upstream mines.

Conservation and Community Values

Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Geneva Park PCA is rated of very high significance. The west side of Burning Bear intersects the Sullivan Mountain PCA and part of Jefferson Hill PCA, which is unique for the largest bristlecone stand ever documented, and rated of high and very high significance respectively. TNC rates all of Burning Bear as of moderate conservation value and the SREP Vision shows it as a core.

Hiking on the Burning Bear Trail, driving up the perimeter roads into Hall Valley or to the historic Geneva town site, or cross-country skiing along Geneva Creek provides many recreation opportunities in a varied setting of forests, wetlands and tundra.



Elk Creek Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Elk Creek is strip of roadless land lying between Mt. Evans Wilderness, Highway 285 and the Harris Park community. One moves quickly from relative civilization to solitude, challenging back country recreation or intimate views of red mushrooms.



Red mushrooms contrast with green forbs. Photo by Naomi Yoder

Location and Boundaries

The Elk Creek Roadless Area, which is contiguous with the Mount Evans Wilderness on the north and west, is bounded by the Harris Park community and some adjacent FRs on the east, and by US Highway 285 on the south. It is in Park County, west of Conifer.

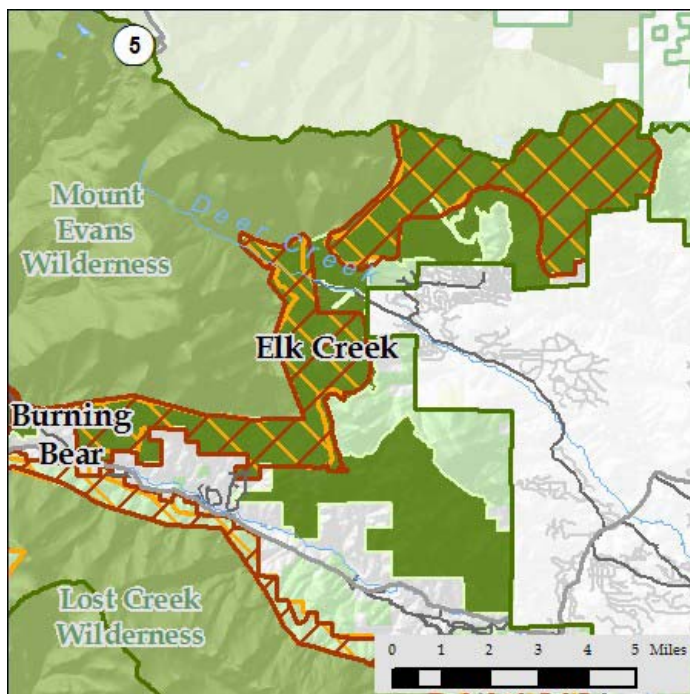
The extent of the Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is considerably larger than that shown in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

Elk Creek is predominantly Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir and lodgepole pine, with ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir near Harris Park and along US Highway 285. Slender cotton grass, a rare plant, is found in the northeast portion, and there are several Forest Service sensitive plants.

Elk Creek Roadless Area

USFS Name: Mt. Evans



Black bear and mountain lion can be sighted in any part of the RA. Bighorn sheep, elk, and mule deer have winter range here, with mule deer winter concentrations along US Highway 285 and three elk calving areas in or adjacent to the unit. Boreal toad habitat is found in the RA. There is lynx habitat across most of the RA with denning habitat on the northeast side. It is strategically located on the western part of the Kenosha Pass lynx linkage.

Conservation and Community Values

The proposed North Elk Creek RNA at the eastern end of the RA is rated of high biological value by Center for Native Ecosystems. It includes the rare slender cotton grass, unique rock features, and possible Mexican spotted owl habitat. The Mud Lakes PCA of general biodiversity interest overlaps the RA in the headwaters area of North Elk Creek. SREP's Vision shows the Elk Creek RA as core wilderness.

Rosalie and Tanglewood Creek Trails pass through the RA, continuing into Mt. Evans Wilderness and providing good hikes with varying degrees of challenge.



Green Mountain Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Green Mountain increases in elevation as it rises from the south to the central mountain peak. Looking west into Green Mountain from the Buffalo Creek road the impression is one of a distant heavily forested slope of dark pines punctuated by patches of aspen and large rock outcrops.

Location and Boundaries

The Green Mountain Roadless Area is in Jefferson County southwest of Wellington Lake. It is directly west of the Long Scraggy Roadless Area and is part of the continuous sweep of land from the South Platte River up to the higher elevations of Green Mountain and the Lost Creek Wilderness. The north boundary is defined by the Colorado Trail as far as the Meadows Campground and then by FR 543 to Wellington Lake. FRs 560 and 544 form the west boundary, with 560 and 211 on the south. The east side is along the Buffalo Creek Road (CR 126). On the west side at Stony Pass, the Wilderness is just across the road.

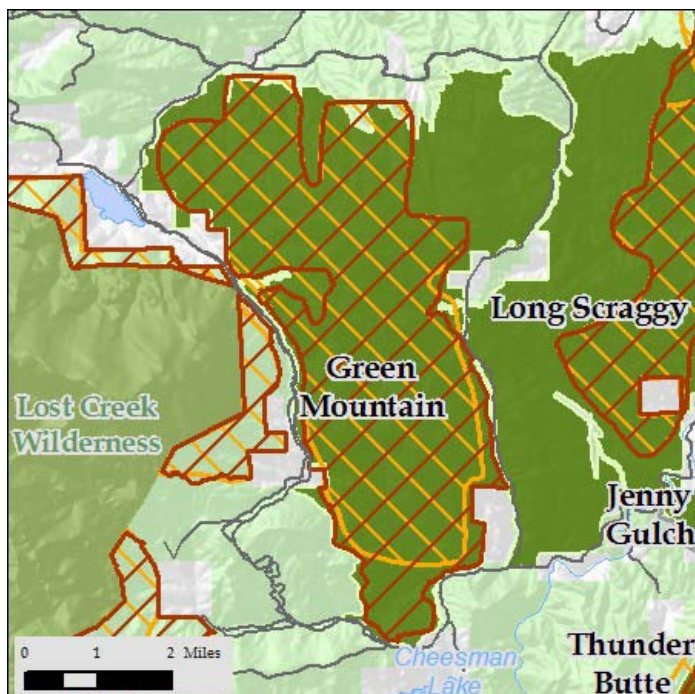
The Green Mountain Roadless Area is somewhat larger than the boundaries of the 2001 Roadless Area Conserva-



Boulders in Green Mountain. Photo by Eric Dek

Green Mountain Roadless Area

USFS name: Green Mountain



tion Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

Rock outcroppings known as Little Scraggy Peak are near Kelsey Campground on the east side. Green Mountain at 10,421 feet in the central RA, and Sugarloaf Peak at 8,501 feet are notable landmarks. Green Mountain Creek, Cabin Creek, Pine Creek, and Wigwam Creek drain the west and south sides of the RA.

The Green Mountain Roadless Area is predominantly ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, but being higher than other areas in the region, it also has scattered stands of lodgepole pine, aspen and some Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir in the highest areas. Near the south end, Wigwam Creek, which began its journey in Lost Creek Wilderness,

finally flows into the South Platte River, providing the diversity that comes in riparian zones. Bear, deer and elk frequent the RA and in the lower elevations the rare Pawnee montane skipper, found only in the montane stretch of the South Platte River, has also been seen. The Hayman fire burned into the southern third of the RA, mostly at high severity, with some low severity areas, so one can observe the recovery over the years.

Black bears and mountain lions roam the RA with a small area of high summer bear activity on the northeast. Mule deer have summer range and elk have both summer and winter range here. There is habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse on the southern end of the RA with two occupied drainages. Pawnee montane skippers have also been observed here. Other notable species include peregrine falcons, as well as, water birch/mesic forb foothills riparian shrubland, Rocky Mountain willow/mesic forb montane riparian willow carr, and Colorado blue spruce/water birch riparian woodland plant communities.

Conservation and Community Values

The central portion of Green Mountain is considered important by the Center for Native Ecosystems. It includes areas favored by elk, and the Little Scraggy and Green Mountain rock outcrops are of interest. This central portion hosts the rare white adder's-mouth orchid and wild turkeys, among other species. Approximately half of Green Mountain is listed by the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. SREP's Vision lists the RA as core wilderness.

There is a short road into the RA from Stony Pass where one can go off into some excellent relatively open forest of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. But the best recreation adventure is along the Colorado Trail, on the northern boundary. The trail follows a relatively even contour as it snakes in and out of the many small drainages between the Buffalo Creek road and the Meadows Campground.



Long Scraggy Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

One can hardly miss the dramatic rocky ridge of Long Scraggy rising above the South Platte River between Deckers and the North Fork of the South Platte. From the west side of the RA the view of Long Scraggy is equally dramatic.



Looking across the RA to Long Scraggy. Photo by Jean C. Smith

Location and Boundaries

Long Scraggy, also known as Gunbarrel for the small stream on the southeast side, is in Jefferson county south of Conifer. The Long Scraggy RA lies between the South Platte River on the east and south, CR 126 on the west, and the Colorado Trail on the north.

The RA as inventoried by Wild Connections is considerably larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

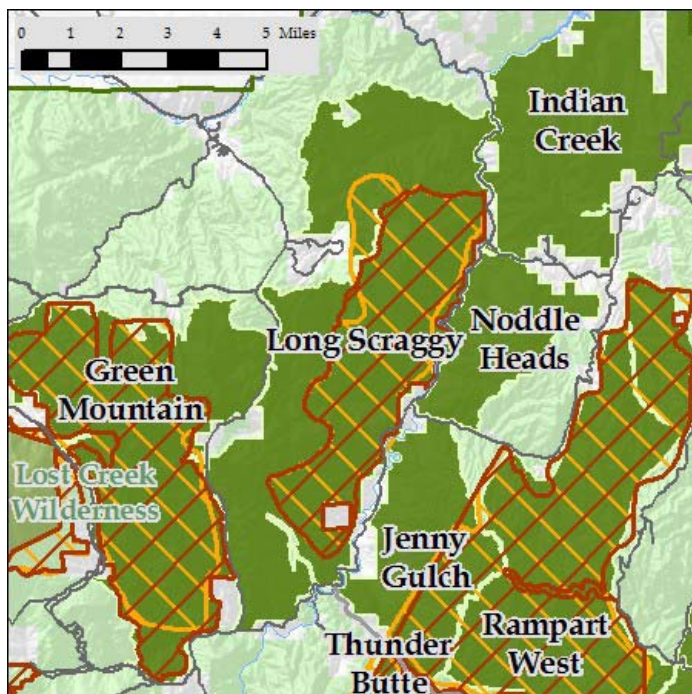
Ecological Values

The huge rocky outcrop of Long Scraggy itself rises dramatically west of the South Platte River and tops

out at 8,800 feet, dominating the viewshed for miles around. Numerous small drainages – Brush Creek, Saloon Gulch, Gunbarrel Creek, Kelsy Creek, and Spring Creek – carve the land west to east. At the north end Raleigh Peak, more than 8,100 feet high, rises above the rolling hills.

The stunning scenery is complemented with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and a few areas of piñon-juniper on all except the rocky heights. Some trees are very large, especially along Gunbarrel Creek where the extra moisture likely contributed to their size. There are water birch/western dogwood lower montane riparian shrublands here as well. Vegetation in the southern end was burned in the Hayman fire.

Long Scraggy Roadless Area
USFS name: Gunbarrel



Habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse is found in riparian zones across the Long Scraggy RA, and there are two occupied drainages on the east side along the South Platte River and one on the south end. Black bear and mountain lion are found in the RA, and mule deer and elk have both summer and winter range here. Mule deer also have good winter range over the whole RA, with elk winter range located in the northern half. Records of rare species include peregrine falcon, bald eagles wintering along the river, Mexican spotted owl, and at least three colonies of Pawnee montane skipper butterflies.

Historically, mining and logging impacted the landscape. Quarries, now closed, west of Raleigh Creek attest to minerals found here, and at various places in the RA there are old diggings of white quartz. Long ago, part of the RA was logged with horses, but most of the remaining stumps are now disintegrated to the point of being invisible.

In 1996, the Buffalo Creek fire burned into the northeastern part of the RA. Several restoration efforts and natural recovery are slowly revegetating the land, but the arid and erosive soils are not conducive to fast regeneration. Likewise, in 2002, the Hayman fire reached its northernmost limit in the Kelsey Creek area. The central portion of the RA burned at high severity. The rest of the RA was low severity with significant areas unburned, especially on the east side and along the perimeter of the fire. However, the erosion that followed the fire can be observed along route 67 north of Deckers, particularly at the egress of Saloon Gulch. This part of the RA will likely take many years to recover, but there are vast seed banks in the unburned forest just to the north.

Conservation and Community Values

The Upper South Platte Restoration Project, located along the perimeter of the 2001 Inventoried Roadless Area, is designed to thin the dense forest in an ecologically sensitive manner to reduce risk of catastrophic fire. Major treatment areas are along the administratively closed FR 534 in Saloon Gulch, FR 536 near Kelsey Creek, on the northwest side along FR 530.

The proposed Long Scraggy RNA includes six plant associations not found in other proposed RNAs according to Center for Native Ecosystems. Long Scraggy Peak is of geological and scenic interest and the Raleigh Peak area has nesting prairie falcons. All of the Long Scraggy RA is listed in the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. SREP's Vision shows the RA as core wilderness.

Routes on the west and north side are closed to motorized use, except for Christmas tree cutting, and provide great hiking or mountain biking across the RA. These routes also service the Upper South Platte Restoration Project. The Hayman and Buffalo Creek fires add more interest as the burned parts slowly recover. Hiking along the Colorado Trail, which defines the north boundary, you can see the effects of fire first hand.



Rampart West Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Rampart West lies on the crest of the Rampart Range in Douglas County. It is essentially roadless, although it is heavily laced with motorized trails in the Rampart Range Recreation Area.

Location and Boundaries

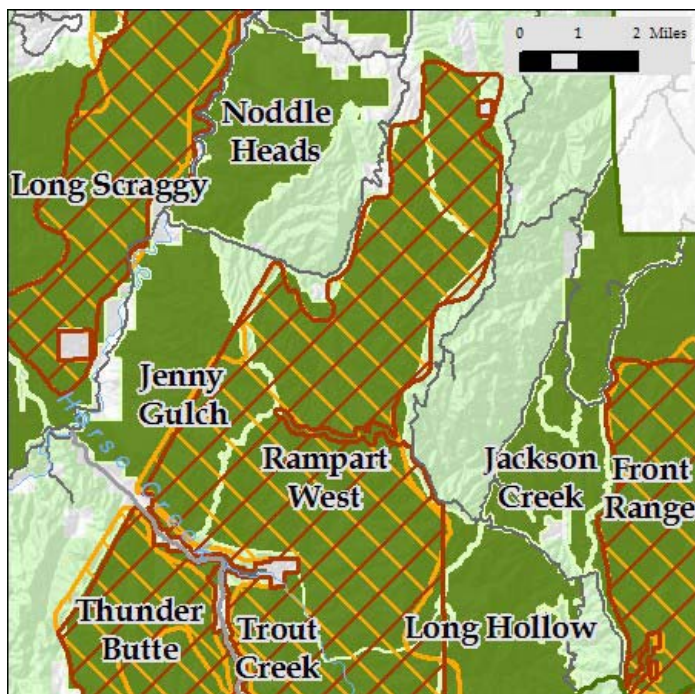
The Rampart West Roadless Area is bounded on the east by the Rampart Range Road and Trails 649 and 650, on the south by private land in the Rainbow Park area, on the southwest by State Route 67, on the west by the power transmission line and then State Highway 67 again.

When Wild Connections inventoried this general vicinity, the part of the 2001 Roadless Conservation Rule Inventoried Roadless Area south of Trail 649 along Eagle and Trout Creeks was split off into the Trout Creek RA and the part west of Trails 672, 677 and 678 was called the Jenny Gulch Roadless Area, with the remainder retaining the name of Rampart West. The redefined Rampart West Roadless Area has no major roads, but it has a large network of motorized trails in the Rampart Range Recreation Area.



The Rampart West RA is extensively used for motorized recreation. Photo by Naomi Yoder.

Rampart West Roadless Area *USFS name: Rampart West*



The Rampart West Roadless Area is included in the the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

The northern part of the RA is primarily Douglas-fir interspersed with ponderosa pine, while the south has proportionately more ponderosa pine and less Douglas-fir. There are some aspen stands along the east side. The natural community of thinleaf alder/mesic forb riparian shrubland and the rare Peck sedge are located in this RA. The Hayman fire stopped in the Trout Creek area just short of the Rampart West Roadless Area.

In the Rampart West Roadless Area, there is summer range for mule deer and elk, with small areas of deer winter range on the south and west. Mountain lion and black bear can be found in the RA. Rare species include American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl, Pawnee montane skipper butterfly, and Preble's meadow jumping mouse. The best habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is in the Trout Creek drainage where there are a half dozen occupied stream segments.

Conservation and Community Values

A PCA of high significance is located on the northeast side of the RA, while the whole RA is included in The Nature Conservancy's large Cheesman conservation area of moderate interest. Colorado Natural Heritage Program ranked a small area in Pine Creek at South Platte a Potential Conservation Area for its high biodiversity significance. Additionally, the Bridge/Polhemus Gulch proposed RNA, located across the south end of the RA, is home for several rare species.

Rampart West provides ATV and motorcycle recreation opportunities to the nearby metropolitan area from late spring through the fall, and snowmobile recreation in the winter. A recently completed travel management plan will improve habitat and trail conditions, with all uses restricted to designated routes.



Sheeprock Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Sheeprock Roadless Area lies between Lost Creek Wilderness and Cheesman Reservoir in Jefferson County southwest of Deckers. The RA is framed by immense granite rocks at the S. Platte River on the south and the large rock formation on the north from which the RA takes its name.

Location and Boundaries

Sheeprock Roadless Area is bounded by Goose Creek on the north, private land and the Matukat Road (FR 211) on the west, Corral Creek Road (FR 540) on the south and the South Platte River and Denver Water Board property on the east.

The majority of the Sheeprock Roadless Area is included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

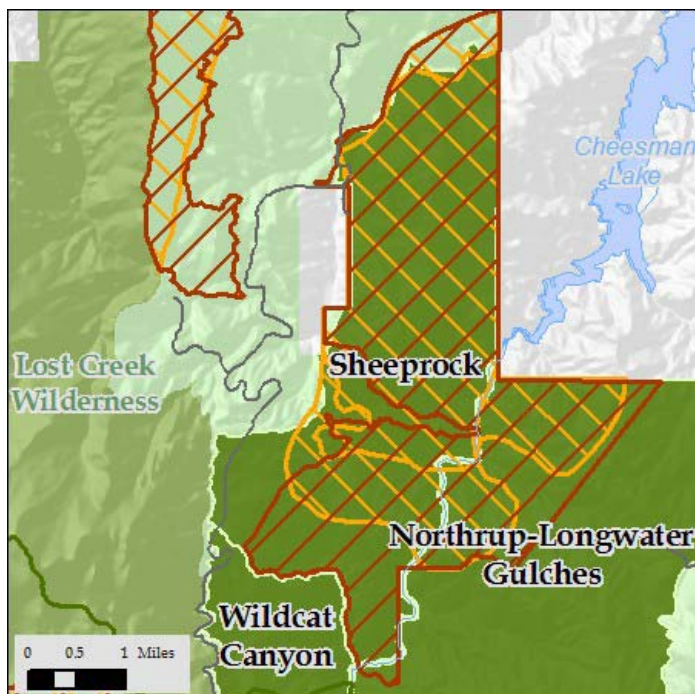
The land is rolling forest or open areas dropping from west to east. Along the South Platte River, there are many large rock formations and a precipitous drop into the river canyon. From the edge of the canyon one can just see Cheesman Reservoir to the northeast.



South Platte River, upstream from Cheesman Reservoir, at southeast edge of Roadless Area. Photo by Mike Kienast

Sheeprock Roadless Area

USFS name: Sheeprock



All of the Sheeprock Roadless Area is within the Hayman burn perimeter; most of it was of high severity. Some areas of low to moderate severity are found on the southeast side or east of the private dude ranch on the north side. Subsequently there was substantial erosion affecting water quality in both the South Platte River and Cheesman Reservoir. Pre-fire, the RA was primarily ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, with some open meadows, including grassy meadows on the south end recovering from the Wildcat Fire of 1963. In the lower reaches

of Wildcat Creek the substantial grove of aspen was in the low severity fire area. The main riparian zone is along Goose Creek on the north boundary was in a high to moderate severity burn area. Goose Creek eventually flows into Cheesman Reservoir east of the RA.

The RA is excellent habitat for elk and mule deer in summer and winter. Mountain lion and black bear use the RA, with a summer bear high activity area on the south end. Bighorn sheep occasionally come into the west side of the RA from their more usual haunts in Lost Creek Wilderness. There is Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat along the South Platte River although none of it is known to be occupied now, and the RA hosts Pawnee montane skipper butterflies. Wild trout are found in the South Platte River unusual in Colorado where fish are typically maintained by annual stocking. In the winter, bald eagles can be found on the reservoir.

Conservation and Community Values

Sheeprock has a proposed RNA across the whole north half of the RA. Sheeprock is included in the TNC Blueprint's Cheesman area of moderate conservation value, and a small portion on the east is included in a PCA of very high significance. SREP's Vision shows the RA as a core wilderness.

Rock climbers are seen on Sheeprock almost any summer day. Anglers sometimes bushwhack down Goose Creek to the reservoir or Corral Creek to the S. Platte River. The previous motorized access to the river via Corral Creek road is currently closed because of the Hayman fire. From the west boundary road, one can hike along long-closed logging tracks to the rocks high above the canyon where the river flows into Cheesman Reservoir.



Square Top Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Square Top Roadless Area rises from Geneva Creek in the Pike-San Isabel to the top of Square Top Mountain at almost 14,000 feet on the Continental Divide. The forested slopes give way to alpine tundra as one climbs from south to north. Beyond Square Top Mountain, Square Top North Roadless Area in the Arapaho Roosevelt Forest descends in a like manner down to Georgetown on I-70.

Location and Boundaries

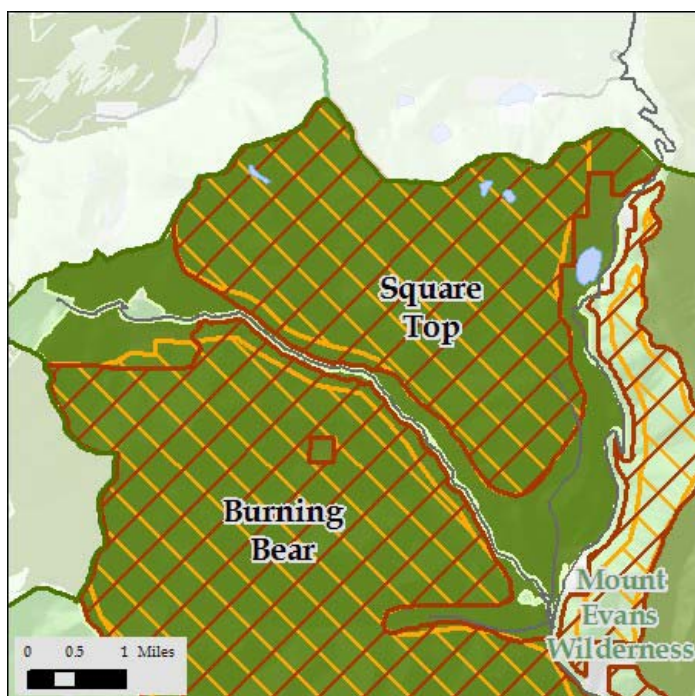
The Square Top Roadless Area is in Park and Clear Creek Counties, north of Grant and west of Mount Evans Wilderness. It is bounded on the east by the Guanella Pass road, on the north and west by the Continental Divide and the Pike-Arapaho Forest boundary, and on the south by the Geneva Creek road. Its northern boundary at the Continental Divide is rather artificial, as the actual RA goes well over into the Arapaho National Forest. This additional area, known as Square Top North, was proposed for Wilderness designation by conservationists for the Arapaho-Roosevelt forest plan revision.



Lower Square Top Lake. Photo by Mike Foster

Square Top Roadless Area

USFS name: Square Top



The Square Top Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than that of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

Square Top, Square Top North, Burning Bear and Mt. Evans Wilderness to the east form a huge area of wild, rugged forest and tundra separated only by the Guanella Pass and Geneva Creek roads, which exemplifies wilderness values and a variety of wildlife habitat.

Because of its high elevations, a large portion of the RA is alpine tundra or rock, with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir and lodgepole pine, and pockets of aspen, in the

forested areas. There are many significant wetlands, especially near Guanella Pass with its notable willow carrs and in the Geneva Basin area. Plant communities such as barren-ground willow/mesic forb alpine willow scrub are important here. There are rare plants including Porter feathergrass, Nagoon berry, Rocky Mountain columbine, and Weber monkey-flower. Unique iron fens are located in Geneva Basin at the historic Geneva town site.

Black bear can be sighted in forested parts of the RA. Bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk have summer range in appropriate habitat, and mountain goats are found in the higher elevations. Lynx habitat is located on the south in the forested areas, including habitat suitable for denning, and radio-collared lynx have been documented in the Guanella Pass area. The Guanella Pass lynx linkage provides north-south connections to the adjacent Arapaho National Forest. Boreal toads are present in the Geneva Creek area, and the reconstruction of the Guanella Pass road includes structural crossings for the toads. Ptarmigan are found on the tundra.

Conservation and Community Values

Part of the CNHP's Geneva Park PCA of high significance is found on the southeast corner of the RA. The Guanella Pass PCA of moderately high significance is located on the northeast corner and overlaps the Square Top North Roadless Area. In addition small parts of Argentine Peak and Collier Mountain PCAs are here. The TNC conservation blueprint shows most of Square Top as having moderate to moderately low conservation value and the SREP Wildlands Vision shows it as a core wilderness.

Square Top Lakes and Shelf Lake in the south and Silver Dollar, Murray and Naylor Lakes on the Arapaho side, add great scenic beauty and are all accessible by pack trails. Other hiking trails are found on the south boundary.



Thunder Butte Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Thunder Butte rises more than 3,000 feet above the surrounding creek drainages of West Creek, Horse Creek and Fourmile Creek. As one descends along Highway 67 past the small community of Westcreek, the dominant impression is of steep partially forested partially burned slopes and huge rock outcrops.

Location and Boundaries

Located between State Highway 67 and Cheesman Reservoir, the Thunder Butte Roadless Area is dominated by its namesake – 9,836 foot Thunder Butte. It is in Jefferson County northeast of Deckers. Colorado Highway 67 along with West Creek and Horse Creek defines the eastern boundary, a power transmission line marks the northwest boundary, FR 523 is on the west side, and an arbitrary line drawn to exclude various roads define the south side.

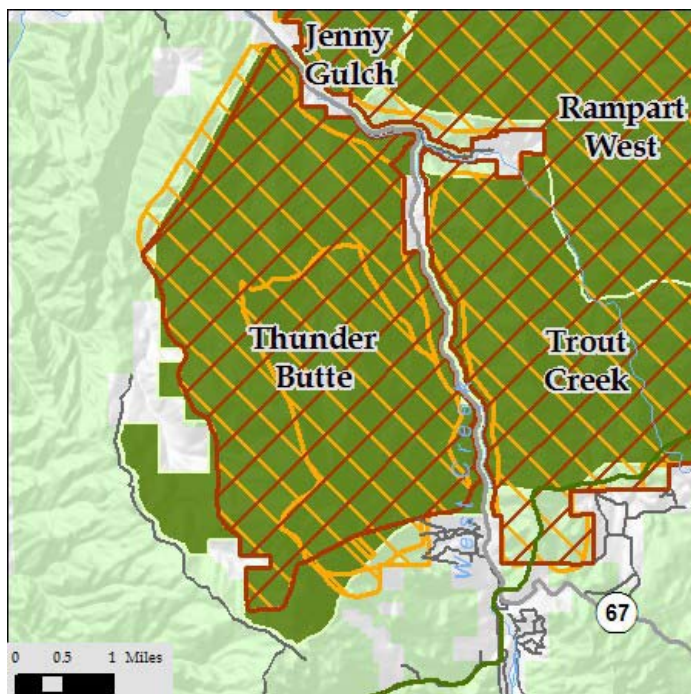


Pasque flowers emerging the spring after the Hayman fire. Photo by Jean C. Smith

Thunder Butte as inventoried by Wild Connections is slightly larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Thunder Butte Roadless Area

USFS name: Thunder Butte



Ecological Values

The Thunder Butte Roadless Area is primarily Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with a few areas of aspen, as well as unforested rocky slopes. There are occurrences of thinleaf alder/mesic forb riparian community. Somewhat less than half of the RA on the northwest side was in the Hayman fire severe burn area, with pockets of moderate burn severity. The rest is a mixture of various burn severities including moderate, low, and unburned areas. Significant parts on the north and east slopes of Thunder Butte were not burned.

The Thunder Butte Roadless Area includes habitat for Mexican spotted owl and Pawnee montane skipper. Bear and mountain lion are found here. Elk have both summer and winter range and mule deer have summer range across the RA. There is Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat in the West Creek/Horse Creek area.

Conservation and Community Values

A sizeable Colorado Natural Heritage PCA of moderate conservation significance is located in the south central part of the Thunder Butte Roadless Area, and the Thunder Butte proposed RNA covers nearly half the RA. Thunder Butte is indicated to be of moderate conservation value in the TNC Blueprint. The SREP Vision lists the RA as core wilderness.

There are no hiking trails here, so backcountry recreation is likely limited to vigorous hikers.



Trout Creek Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Trut Creek Roadless Area is a place of high riparian value centered on Trout Creek, a large tributary of the South Platte River draining a large part of the west slope of the Rampart Range.

Location and Boundaries

The Trout Creek Roadless Area, the extreme southern part of the 2001 Roadless Rule Rampart West Roadless Area, lies east of Colorado Highway 67 in Douglas County, approximately 15 miles north of Woodland Park. It is bounded by Forest Route 649 on the north, which follows Eagle and Trout Creeks, Colorado Highway 67 on the west, and by substantial private inholdings on the south, and is separated from the Long Hollow Roadless Area to the east by a motorized OHV trail (FR 650).

The Trout Creek Roadless Area is included in the the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.



*Preble's meadow jumping mouse, live trapped for census count.
Photo courtesy of Fish and Wildlife Service*

Trout Creek Roadless Area

USFS name: Rampart West



Ecological Values

The Trout Creek Roadless Area is a mix of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with aspen and other riparian species on the north boundary along Eagle and Trout Creeks. The 2002 Hayman Fire burned with low to moderate severity west of Trout Creek, but was contained in the wet areas of Trout Creek.

The most notable rare species here is the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, which has extensive suitable habitat in the Trout Creek drainage through the center of the RA and in West Creek tributaries on the western edge of the RA. There are eight occupied segments within the RA, with others in adjacent areas. Like most of the other RAs

in this part of the region, there is summer range for mule deer and elk, and there is a large elk and mule deer winter range along Trout Creek just south of the RA. Mountain lion and black bear also are found here.

Conservation and Community Values

All of Trout Creek is included in TNC's large Cheesman conservation area of moderate significance, and SREP's Vision shows the RA as part of the large area of low use that extends south to the Forest boundary.

Under the Rampart Range Recreation Plan, Forest Route 649 running along Trout Creek on the edge of the RA is closed to motorized recreation. The RA therefore provides opportunities for nonmotorized recreation, including excellent fishing opportunities in several miles of trout stream.



Indian Creek Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Located between the South Platte River and the Rampart Range Recreation Area, Indian Creek Roadless Area has particular value for quiet recreation, water quality and low elevation ecosystems. The north side of the RA drops into the South Platte River corridor and Strontia Springs Reservoir, the major conduit for metro Denver's drinking water.



Indian Creek has a profusion of flowers, pine, aspen and riparian willows.
Photo by Jean C. Smith

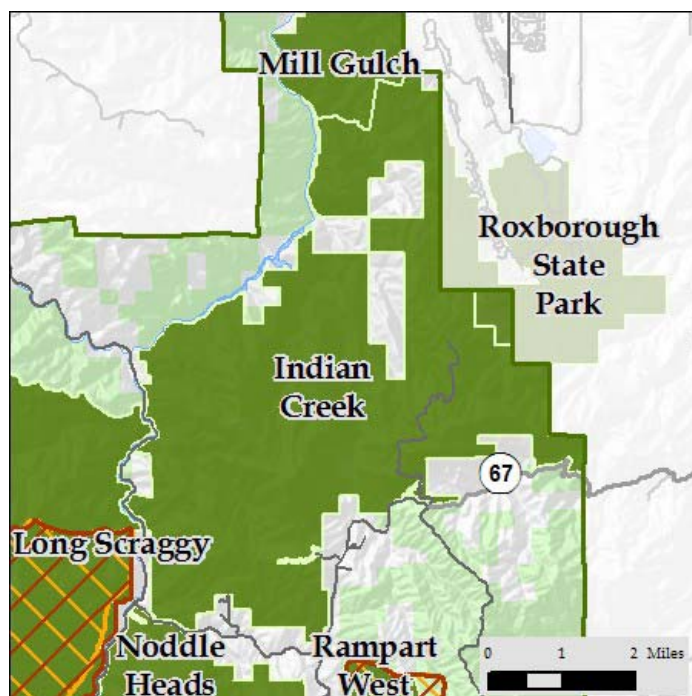
Location and Boundaries

The Indian Creek Roadless Area is located near the extreme northeast corner of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest. It is bounded by the National Forest boundary on the east, the Mill Gulch Roadless Area boundary on the north, the South Platte River Road (CR 96) on the west, and Colorado 67 and Pine Creek Road (CR 40) on the south.

This Indian Creek Roadless Area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Indian Creek Roadless Area

USFS Name: n/a



Ecological Values

The Indian Creek Roadless Area is predominantly ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, with some small pockets of aspen and montane shrubland. Rare plants identified in Indian Creek include prairie violet and a rare fern. The RA is also noted for its lower montane riparian shrublands and thinleaf alder/mesic for riparian shrublands.

The South Platte bighorn sheep band is primarily located north of the South Platte River and the Strontia Springs Reservoir where there is also a production area, but the sheep can be found on both sides of the South Platte River below the dam and may occasionally go into the northern portion of Indian Creek. Mule deer have summer and

winter range here, with summer concentrations of bears across the RA. Mountain lions also roam here. Riparian areas throughout Indian Creek could support Preble's meadow jumping mouse, and there is occupied habitat on the south central side near Colorado Highway 67. Other rare species identified in Indian Creek include Pawnee montane skipper and ovenbirds

Conservation and Community Values

Willow Creek, located in the southeast corner of the RA, is recommended by conservationists for further research and evaluation. Colorado Natural Heritage Program lists a PCA of very high significance along the Bear Creek drainage. Approximately half of Indian Creek RA is listed by the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. The SREP Vision shows the RA as low use.

There are a number of travelways in the RA. Some of these are motorized trails, but many are used primarily by mountain bikers, hikers and horseback riders. Several roads have been closed by the Forest Service to prevent additional habitat and enforcement problems. The Indian Creek campground on Highway 67 has been refurbished to accommodate horses, as well as provide camp sites for those using the Rampart Range Recreation Area. Mountain bikers can make a loop through the RA from the Colorado Trail on the northern edge, and lush riparian vegetation and wildflowers abound.



Mill Gulch Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Mill Gulch Roadless Area lies on a high ridge overlooking the South Platte Canyon and the spectacular red rock formations of Roxborough State Park to the east.

Location and Boundaries

Mill Gulch is in Douglas County at the extreme northeast corner of the Forest. It is bounded by the Forest boundary on the north and east, the South Platte River on the west, and an arbitrary boundary corresponding to the evaluation for potential RNA on the south.



Mill Gulch in the fall provides a scenic backdrop for the South Platte river Canyon. Photo by Jean C. Smith

The Mill Gulch Roadless Area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

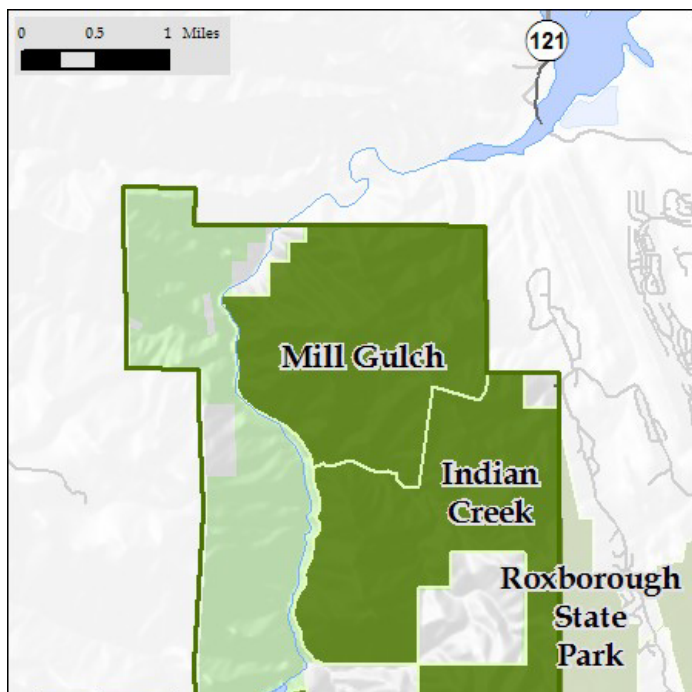
Ecological Values

Although small, due to its separation from the larger Indian Creek Roadless area, it has great biological diversity. In spite of its proximity to the recreational and Denver Water activities along the river and to housing developments to the east, this roadless area provides relatively secure wildlife habitat because of its steep topography and lack of road access.

Rare plant associations include mountain mahogany/needle-and-thread grass mixed foothill shrublands, Douglas-fir/Geyer's willow lower montane forests, Gambel oak/Geyer's willow mesic oak thickets, and needle-and-thread grass/blue grama montane grasslands.

Mill Gulch Roadless Area

USFS name: n/a



Mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk find summer range in the Mill Gulch roadless area, with a summer black bear high activity area and mule deer winter range. Mountain lions are found here. Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the Pawnee montane skipper butterfly have been recorded here.

Conservation and Community Values

SREP's Vision shows the roadless area as core agency.

Vigorous hikes can take a rough trail from the South Platte up Mill Gulch, or come across the ridge from Roxborough and bushwhack along the upper reaches.



Noddle Heads Roadless Area

South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The large rock formations known as the Noddle Heads, which give this RA its name, can be seen from many surrounding viewpoints. There is also abundant low elevation habitat for wildlife, including some for Pawnee montane skipper butterflies that live only in the South Platte corridor.

Location and Boundaries

Noddle Heads Roadless Area is located in Douglas County between the Rampart Recreation Area and the South Platte River. It is in a rectangle formed by Pine Creek Road (CR 40) on the north, motorized Trail 677 on the east, CR 67 along Sugar Creek on the south, and CR 97 along the South Platte River on the west.

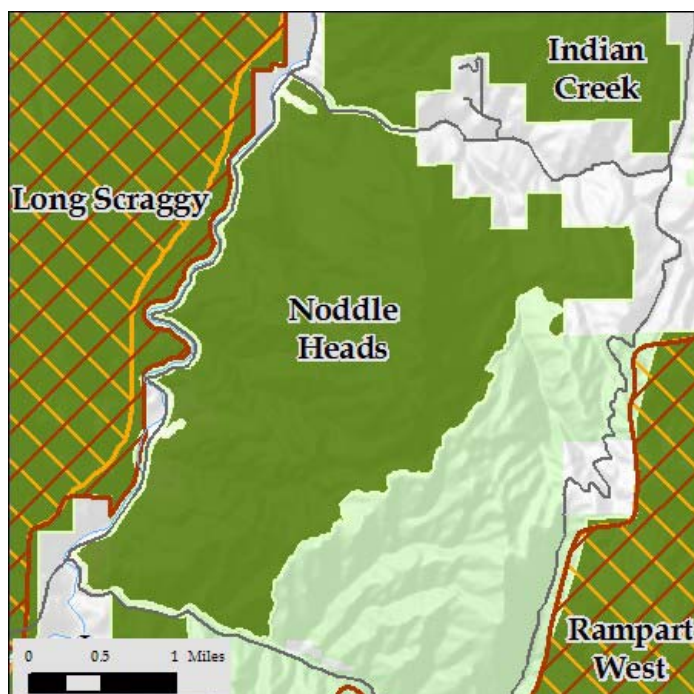


Yucca and ponderosa pine forest. Photo by Sherril Potter

The Noddle Heads Roadless Area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Noddle Heads Roadless Area

USFS names: n/a



Ecological Values

The Noddle Heads Roadless Area is a mixture of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest.

Most of the RA is within the habitat range of Preble's meadow jumping mouse, with four occupied drainages on the west side along the South Platte River. Black bear and mountain lion are found in the RA, and mule deer and elk have both summer and winter range. Pawnee montane skipper butterfly, peregrine falcon, Mexican spotted owl are recorded here, and bald eagles are often observed in winter along the river.

Conservation and Community Values

All of the Noddle Heads Roadless Area is listed by the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. SREP's Vision shows the RA as low use.

Trails in Noddle Heads provide motorized recreation.



Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area South Platte Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Northrup-Longwater Gulches at the South Platte River are dominated by granite monoliths which reveal the underlying formations of the Pikes Peak batholith of ancient times. It borders the east bank of the South Platte River for eight miles.

Location and Boundaries

The Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area is located northwest of Woodland Park, primarily in Teller and Douglas Counties. It is bounded by the South Platte River on the west, Denver Water Board land on the north, and on the east and south the boundary is defined by FRs 360/525 near Turkey Creek and FR 897.

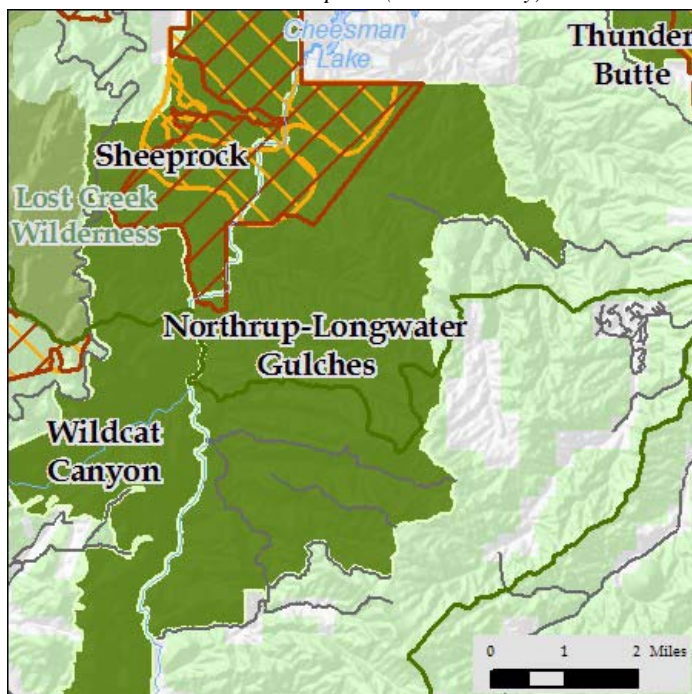


Towering granite gates guard the South Platte River that is the western boundary of these Gulches. Photo by Mike Kienast

Of the Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area, only a small part on the northwest end was included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area

USFS name: Sheeprock (northwest only)



Ecological Values

The land here is well above the South Platte River on the east side of the RA and then drops sharply into the South Platte canyon on the west. Prior to the Hayman Fire, there were several motorized routes in the RA used by four-wheelers, ATVs, and motorcycles. These are all currently closed because of safety concerns and resource damage, including massive erosion into the South Platte River.

Prior to the Hayman Fire, the Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area was about equally ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, with a few aspen groves and mountain shrublands. The fire burned with low severity north of Metberry Gulch and along Northrup Gulch, so possibly the habitat here was less affected.

The RA harbors mountain lion, mule deer, elk, and black bear, with a small area of high summer bear activity along the river. Elk and mule deer also have winter rangeland in the south half and on the east along the river, respectively. Pawnee montane skippers have been observed here, and the RA has good examples of Douglas-fir/water birch montane riparian forest.

Conservation and Community Values

All of the Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Area is listed by the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Cheesman PCA of very high significance spills into the extreme north end where the RA abuts Denver Water Board land. The SREP Vision shows the RA as core agency.

The Hayman Travel Management Plan will reopen FR 221, among others, which gives access to the river ford near Corral Creek, when conditions permit. Several areas along the east side are part of the Hayman Salvage Logging Project. Conservationists have recommended most of the routes be permanently closed and rehabilitated to protect wildlife values and particularly to improve water quality in the river, which is a major source of domestic water for metropolitan Denver.

