

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (RNA) PROGRAM

USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station and Pacific Southwest Region

RNA USE APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FORM

General Information and Instructions:

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Research Natural Areas (RNAs) network protects some of the finest examples of natural ecosystems for the purposes of scientific study, education and maintenance of biological diversity. RNAs are managed to maintain the natural features for which they were established and to maintain natural processes. Because of the emphasis on natural conditions, they represent a valuable ecological resource for scientists, managers and educators. The Forest Service encourages scientific and educational use of Research Natural Areas. This application and approval process ensures that all activities conducted within RNAs meet the rigorous management criteria to perpetuate these ecosystems for future generations.

In general, non-manipulative research that does not significantly impact or alter the ecological composition, structure, or function is appropriate within RNAs. The level of acceptable use varies by RNA, depending on the rarity of taxa, fragility or resilience of the ecosystems, and cumulative impacts of use.

All organized activities (including research and management activities conducted by Forest Service employees) inside a RNA require approval by the Pacific Southwest (PSW) Research Station Director and, in some cases, by the Pacific Southwest (R5) Regional Forester (for RNAs within Wilderness or other congressionally designated areas). In addition, access to conduct research in an RNA requires approval by the District Ranger who manages the RNA, who may require additional permits and permissions for the proposed work (separate from this permit application).

Applications for research, monitoring, or educational activities should be routed to a Station RNA liaison who will assist the applicant with the approval process. When proposed activities will involve several Research Natural Areas within California, submit one RNA use request form, listing the RNAs. When proposed activities cross regional boundaries (see map figure on last page of this form), submit a separate RNA use request form to each Research Station for approval.

Requirements of Activity Approval:

As part of the approval process, the applicant agrees to work with the appropriate Ranger District office to determine if notification is needed for access and agrees to follow safety protocol(s) outlined by the District Ranger. In addition, plant, animal or any other specimen collected during the course of a study will be deposited in a location approved by the Station Director. Additional State and Federal permits are required for collection of any wildlife species including threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.

All users of RNAs are expected to file a brief summary report with the coordinating PSW Research Station liaison no later than 1 year following completion of the activity. This report may be in the form of a letter that outlines findings and observations. In addition, the applicant must provide the Station Director with copies of all sampling location coordinates, data, reports, and publications resulting from the research including theses, dissertations, articles, monographs, etc. for our archives.

Please send this application, and any other correspondence regarding use of RNAs, to the PSW Research Station RNA liaison (see link on PSW Station website: <https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/rna/using.shtml>).

12. DESCRIBE PROJECT OBJECTIVES OR ATTACH A STUDY PLAN:

13. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE RNA:

14. START DATE:

15. END DATE:

16. TYPE OF USE (Select one: Observation, Educational or Scientific Research):

Observation and monitoring activities (including no site manipulation, no establishment of study plots, or no samples collected):

Describe number of days on site and specific measurements to be taken, and skip to question 1 :

Educational:

Describe (including the target audience, number of visitors to the RNA and nature of the educational activities), and skip to question 18:

Scientific Research:

Complete 17-a, -b, and -c and attach a detailed study plan or research proposal.

17-a Report the approximate Latitude-Longitude and UTM coordinates for your proposed research study location(s). If locations are not known, include a map of the RNA with your target study areas clearly outlined.

17-b Will there be any long-term instrumentation installed (e.g. instrument shelters, flumes, weirs, towers, etc.) in the RNA? NO YES

If yes, describe installation of instrumentation and process of removal at the close of the study:

17-c What is unique about this RNA that makes it fit the needs of your research study?

18. RNA site visit(s) (date(s) and length(s) of time):

19. Crew or group size:

20. Samples to be collected:

21. Archive plan for collected samples:

22. Other (e.g., how many entries to the RNA do you plan? Will you be creating a trail by repeated use or using an existing trail? What temporary markers will you need to install? Etc.):

23. By signing this Research Natural Area (RNA) Use Request Form, applicants conducting research, education, or monitoring on the RNA agree to:

Terms and Requirements:

- notify the District Ranger's Office of each access to the RNA and follow the suggested safety guidelines given by the District Ranger;
- follow any additional requirements or limitations specified within the review and approval section of this form;
- do not engage in any activities inside the RNA beyond the scope of those specified in this RNA use request form and, if required, the attached study plan;
- provide copies of all sampling location coordinates, data, reports and publications from this research including theses, dissertations, articles, monographs, etc., to the Station RNA Liaison for Station archives and distribute copies to National Forest and Regional resource managers;
- send a final report on the results of the approved activity to the Station RNA Liaison no later than one year following completion of activity, if such information has not been completely covered above;
- if removing flora or fauna, (1) obtain appropriate permits from State and Federal agencies; (2) carefully control approved species collection, especially those that are endangered, threatened, or rare; and (3) deposit voucher samples of plants in a herbarium or museum;
- follow Best Management Practices to reduce possibility of introducing non-native invasive species (NNIS) and disease pathogens;
- leave the site in a pristine condition when activity is concluded. This precludes leaving any monumentation, tree tags, markers, apparatus, etc.

I have read and agree to fully comply with the terms and requirements for RNA use found in the RNA use request form (above) as well as additional guidelines outlined below in the review and approval blocks associated with the final approval of this RNA Use request.

Signature

Title

Date Submitted

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION AND SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THE SUBSEQUENT REVIEWER / APPROVER RECEIVES THE DOCUMENT BY EMAIL DIRECTLY FROM THE PREVIOUS SIGNER

USDA FOREST SERVICE RESEARCH NATURAL AREA INTERNAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL SECTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESEARCH STATION RNA LIAISON

Date received:

Review Comments and/or additional guidelines for approval:

I understand the above proposed research or activity and recommend approval of this Research Natural Area activity.

Signature

Date

Title:

Research Station:

Physical Address:

Email:

Phone:

RESEARCH STATION RNA LIAISON

IS THE RNA IN A CONGRESSIONALLY DESIGNATED AREA?

YES ***The Station RNA Liaison should route the application to the Station Director for his/her recommendation and comments then to the Regional Forester for final approval.***

NO ***The Station RNA Liaison should route the application to the Station Director for final approval.***

*Approval for RNAs that are **not** in designated wilderness, wild and scenic river, national recreation area, or other congressionally designated areas.*

USDA FOREST SERVICE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RESEARCH STATION DIRECTOR

Approved by:

Signature Date

Title:

Comments (if any):

Please return this form to the Station RNA Liaison to mail signed approved form to applicant, and cc Regional NFS RNA Coordinator.

Approval for RNAs that are in designated wilderness, wild and scenic river, national recreation area, or other congressionally designated areas.

USDA FOREST SERVICE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RESEARCH STATION DIRECTOR

I understand the above proposed research or activity and recommend approval and access to the listed Research Natural Area(s).

Signature Date

Title:

Review Comments:

Please route to the Pacific Southwest Regional Forester; cc Station RNA Liaison

USDA FOREST SERVICE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGIONAL FORESTER

Approved by:

Signature Date

Title:

Comments (if any):

Please return this form to the Pacific Southwest Research Station RNA Liaison to mail signed approved form to applicant and cc Regional RNA Coordinator