Natural Areas: Section II – Special Environmental Concerns, FOTG-Texas

Authority – Code of Federal Regulations Part 7 §650.23; GM 190.410.23

Land or water units where natural conditions retained or protected.

- May be designated areas of Federal government, non-Federal government, or private land.
- Designation may be formal provided under Federal regulations, by foundations or conservation organizations, or by private land-owners specifying it as such.

Natural conditions usually result from allowing ordinary physical and biological processes to operate with a minimum of human intervention.

Manipulations may be required to maintain or restore features areas established to protect.

Several professional societies concerned with renewable natural resources encourage

- Establishment of natural areas withdrawn from economic uses, and/or
- Recognize natural areas maintained and/or managed in economic enterprises.

Established and maintained for a variety of purposes including:

- Science and education. Sites for research and outdoor classrooms for study of plant and animal communities in environments with particular ecological conditions.
- Monitor surrounding environment. Gauges against which to evaluate changes in land use, vegetation, animal life, air quality, or other environmental values.
- Recreation. Valued for scenic, wild, and undisturbed character, but protected to prevent disturbance or alteration of the resources.
- Unique values. Protect scenic, biologic, geologic, paleontological, etc., features.
- Genetic base for plants and animals. Land and water eco-systems with full range of genetic diversity of plants and animals.

NRCS State offices must ensure natural area designations identified and considered during planning process. 190-GM, Section 410.23, for specific policies integrated into NRCS activities.

See NECH sub-part H, section 610.112 for “Natural Areas Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet.”