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Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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AUG 30 2004

**DENR MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**

No. 2004 - 09

**SUBJECT : Amending DMC 35, series of 1993 re: Criteria and Guidelines for the Categorization of Protected Areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS)**

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 7586 or the NIPAS Act and in order to provide a more appropriate criteria that will suit the present biophysical and socio-economic conditions of protected areas in the country, the criteria and guidelines for the categorization of protected areas under NIPAS as provided under Annex A of DMC 35 Series of 1993 is hereby amended in accordance with the attached matrix.

**SECTION 1. Title** – This Memorandum Circular shall be known as the Amended guidelines for the categorization of Protected Areas under the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

**SECTION 2. Objective** - It shall be the objective of this circular to set forth the guidelines for the categorization of Protected Areas under NIPAS.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Categories:**

1. **Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)** - is an area possessing some outstanding ecosystem, features and/or species of flora and fauna of national scientific importance, maintained to protect nature and maintain processes in an undisturbed state in order to have ecologically representative examples of the natural environmental monitoring, education and for maintenance of genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state;

2. **Natural Park (NP)** - is a relatively large area not materially altered by human activity where extractive resource uses are not allowed and which are maintained to protect outstanding natural and scenic areas of national or international significance for scientific, educational and recreational use;

3. **Natural Monuments/Natural Landmark (NM/NL)** – is a relatively small area focused on protection of small features to preserve nationally significant natural features on account of their special interest or unique characteristics;

4. **Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)** – comprises an area which assures the natural conditions necessary to protect nationally significant species, groups of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment where these may require specific human manipulation for their perpetuation;

5. **Protected Landscape and Seascape (PL/S)** – are areas of national significance which are characterized by the harmonious interaction of man and land while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within the normal lifestyles and economic activity of these areas;

6. **Resource Reserve (RS)** – is an extensive and relatively isolated and uninhabited area normally with difficult access designated as such to protect natural resources of the area for future use and prevent or contain development activities that could affect the resources pending the establishment of objectives which are based upon appropriate knowledge and planning;

7. **Natural Biotic Area/Anthropological Reserve** – is an area set aside to allow the way of life of societies living in harmony with the environment to adopt to modern technology at their pace; and

8. **Other categories** – refer to those areas established by law, conventions or international agreements which the Philippine Government is a signatory.

**SECTION 4. Criteria** – the following criteria shall be used in the determination of categories appropriate for each of the protected areas found suitable for inclusion in the NIPAS

1. **Natural Feature** – This criterion includes representatives of the various ecosystems within the protected area, the diversity of biota and habitats, and the ecological state of the area.
2. **Management Objective** – This includes the administration of protected area taking into consideration social acceptability of the conservation program, accessibility of the area and the presence of natural and cultural features of the area.
3. **Allowable Human Activities** – These include the human activities that are dependent on the natural features of the protected area including those that have outstanding physical features.
4. **Appropriate Management Zones** – This pertains to the recommended management zones for each of the NIPAS category. The management zones are established on a need basis and/or usefulness based on existing and planned land-use inside the protected area.

**SECTION 5. Categorization** – The categorization of the protected areas shall be done in accordance with the Protected Area Category Matrix attached as Annex A. This will be substantiated by the results of the Protected Areas Suitability Assessment (PASA). For further guidance, Annex B may be used.

**SECTION 6. Report** - The Regional Executive Director shall submit to the Secretary through the Director, PAWB, a report on the categorization of each of the protected areas found suitable for inclusion in NIPAS. This report shall also include the rationale/justification for the categorization made.

*AMS*

**SECTION 7. Repealing Clause** - This Memorandum Circular supersedes all Circulars and/or Memoranda inconsistent herewith.

**SECTION 8. Effectivity** – This Circular shall take effect immediately upon approval.

*Elisea G. Gozun*  
**ELISEA G. GOZUN**  
*S* Secretary *ELG*

**PROTECTED AREA CATEGORIZATION MATRIX\***

Annex A

Protected Area Category

CRITERIA	Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)	Natural Park (NP)	Natural Monument (NM)	Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)	Protected Landscapes Seascapes (PL/S)	Resource Reserve (RR)	Natural Biotic Area (NBA)
1. Natural Feature	Area with biodiversity rich natural ecosystems in an undisturbed state.	Relatively large biodiversity rich natural ecosystems; capable of sustaining/maintaining ecological processes/functions	Nationally significant natural features of cultural or geologic value	Habitat of a species or a group of species of priority management concern  Habitat of important wildlife species (endemic and threatened) as indicated by species assemblage (e.g. Endemic Bird Area, Important Bird Area, Important Plant Area)	Areas of national significance which are characterized by the harmonious interaction of human and nature	Extensive and relatively uninhabited isolated and inaccessible resource base	Areas of extensive cultural significance; indigenous peoples and other local communities living in harmony with their environment practicing their culture and traditions
2. Management Objective (s)	Research and scientific studies  environmental monitoring  conservation education  maintenance of genetic resources and natural ecological processes	Biodiversity conservation and maintenance of natural ecological processes  Nature recreation,  Research & scientific Studies  Environmental monitoring	Conservation and protection of specific natural features	Protection and conservation of wildlife and their habitat	Protection of natural features and providing opportunities for sustainable resource use	Conservation and protection of natural resources for future use	Protection and conservation of culture/customs and traditions of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other local communities and their environment including resources
3. Allowable Human Activities**	Limited scientific research i.e. counts, observations, and measurements at the site; educational activities	Nature Recreation  Regulated resource use, consistent with management plan EXCEPT cutting of naturally growing trees	Nature Recreation  Scientific research with regulated collection of specimens	Scientific research with regulated collection of specimens  Nature Recreation  Regulated resource use EXCEPT those that are essential to conservation of the species being managed and cutting of naturally growing trees	Sustainable socio-economic activities and traditional practices (ecotourism included)  Regulated resource use EXCEPT cutting of naturally growing trees. However, cutting of naturally growing trees for personal and non commercial use of tenured migrants may be allowed, subject to allocation criteria prescribed by PAMB	Research and scientific studies  Biodiversity monitoring	Traditional and sustainable resource use
4. Appropriate Management Zones***	Strict Protection and Buffer Zone (SPZ and BZ)	All zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992 except multiple use zones.  Multiple use zones shall only be allowed to be established in areas with existing human settlements and where social services from the government are available.	Strict Protection, Cultural, Restoration, and Buffer Zones	All zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992 except Special Use Zones (SUZ)	All Zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992	Strict Protection, Cultural, Restoration and Buffer Zones	All zones as defined in DAO 25 S 1992

\* In all categories, the customary rights and traditional practices of Indigenous Peoples shall be recognized, respected and allowed

\*\*Mining is prohibited in all protected areas, regardless of categories pursuant to Mining Act of 1995

\*\*\*Treasure hunting may be allowed in all categories, except Strict Nature Reserve; restrictions also apply in strict protection zone and known habitats of endangered species

## Conservation Objectives of Protected Area Categories

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE	Strict Nature: Reserve/ Scientific Reserve	Natural Park	Natural Monument/ Natural Landmark	Wildlife Sanctuary/ Managed Nature Reserve	Protected Landscape/ Seascape	Resource Reserve	Natural Biotic Area/ Antropological Reserve
Maintain sample ecosystem in natural state	/	/	/	/	x	x	/
Maintain ecological diversity and environmental regulation	x	/	/	x	x	x	/
Conserve genetic resources	/	/	/	/	x	x	/
Provide education, research & environmental monitoring	/	x	/	/	x	x	x
Conserved watershed, flood control	x	/	x	x	x	x	x
Control erosion and sedimentation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maintain indigenous use or habitation					/	x	/
Produce protein from wildlife				x	x	x	x
Produce timber, forage or extractive commodities					x	x	x
Provide recreation and tourism service		/	/	x	/		x
Protect sites and objects of cultural, historical, or archaeological heritage		x	x	x	/	x	/
Protect scenic beauty	x	/	x	x	/		
Maintain open options management flexibility multiple-use					x	/	
Contribute to rural development	x	/	x	x	/	x	x

## Sources:

1. Miller, K.R. 1980. Planning National Parks for Ecodevelopment, Center for Strategic Wildland Management Studies, Ann Arbor;
2. IUCN/UNEP 1986, Managing Protected Areas in the Tropics, IUCN, Gland Switzerland

## Notes:

/ = Primary Objectives

X = Compatible Objectives

**COMPARATIVE MATRIX**

CRITERIA	CATEGORIES	EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p><b>Natural Feature</b></p>	<p><b>Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)</b></p>	<p>Pristine natural environment of unusual species diversity</p>	<p>Area with biodiversity-rich natural ecosystems in an undisturbed state</p>
	<p><b>Natural Park (NP)</b></p>	<p>An ecological community with minimum disturbance significantly illustrating the process of succession and restoring to natural conditions following disruptive change</p>	<p>Relatively large biodiversity rich natural ecosystems; capable of sustaining/maintaining ecological processes/functions</p>
	<p><b>Natural Monument (NM)</b></p>	<p>Unique geological features of aesthetic or scientific values e.g. volcanoes, caves, etc.</p>	<p>Nationally significant natural features of cultural or geologic value</p>
	<p><b>Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)</b></p>	<p>Important wildlife species, unique, rare, threatened and endangered</p>	<p>Habitat of a species or a group of species of priority management concern</p>
			<p>Habitat of important wildlife species (endemic and threatened) as indicated by species assemblage (e.g. Endemic Bird Area, Important Bird Area, Important Plant Area)</p>
	<p><b>Protected Landscapes/ Seascapes (PL/S)</b></p>	<p>Multiple use character (harmonious interaction of man, land and sea)</p>	<p>Areas of national significance which are characterized by the harmonious interaction of human and nature</p>
	<p><b>Resource Reserve (RR)</b></p>	<p>Extensive and relatively isolated, uninhabited and inaccessible</p>	<p>Extensive and relatively uninhabited, isolated and inaccessible resource base</p>
<p><b>Management Objective (s)</b></p>	<p><b>Natural Biotic Area (NBA)</b></p>	<p>Ancestral domain (natural sites)</p>	<p>Areas of extensive cultural significance; indigenous peoples and other local communities living in harmony with their environment practicing their culture and traditions</p>
	<p><b>Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)</b></p>	<p>For science or wilderness protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and scientific studies</li> <li>- Environmental monitoring</li> <li>- Conservation Education</li> <li>- Maintenance of genetic resources and natural ecological processes</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Natural Park (NP)</b></p>	<p>For ecosystem conservation and recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity conservation and maintenance of natural ecological processes</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and scientific studies</li> <li>- Environmental monitoring</li> </ul>

### COMPARATIVE MATRIX

CRITERIA	CATEGORIES	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Allowable Human Activities	Natural Monument (NM)	For conservation of specific natural-features	Conservation and protection of specific natural features
	Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)	For conservation of wildlife	Protection and conservation of wildlife and their habitat
	Protected Landscapes/Seascapes	For landscape/seascape conservation and recreation	Protection of natural features and providing opportunities for sustainable resource use
	Resource Reserve (RR)	For protection of the natural resources of the area for future use	Conservation and protection of natural resources for future use
	Natural Biotic Area (NBA)	For preservation of ICCs and their culture and tradition	Protection and conservation of culture/customs and traditions of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other local communities and their environment, including resources
	Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)	Limited scientific research activity involving only measurements, counts and observations - e.g. behavioral studies of primates, counts of migratory wildlife	Limited scientific research i.e. counts, observations, and measurements at the site and educational activities
	Natural Park (NP)	Regulated recreation such as sight seeing, bird watching and trekking etc. and Limited scientific research activity involving only measurements, counts and observations e.g. behavioral studies of primates, counts of migratory wildlife	Nature Recreation - Regulated resource use, consistent with management plan EXCEPT cutting of naturally growing trees
	Natural Monument (NM)	Regulated recreation e.g. controlled seasonal hunting and fishing	#NAME? - Scientific research with regulated collection of specimens
Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)	- Scientific research involving small scale manipulation experiments e.g. habitat and population, planting food plants or creation of artificial water hole, saltlicks, etc. - Controlled recreation e.g. Sight seeing, trekking, tour in a simple trail system	- Scientific research with regulated collection of specimens - Nature recreation - Regulated resource use EXCEPT those that are essential to conservation of the species being managed and cutting of naturally growing trees	
Protected Landscape/Seascape	Socio-economic activities with emphasis on the development of compatible sustainable practices e.g. controlled collection of dead wood, wildfruits, honey and other minor forest products; traditional hunting and fishing practices - Regulated recreation e.g. Bird	- Sustainable socio economic activities and traditional practices (ecotourism included) -Regulated resource use EXCEPT cutting of naturally growing trees  however, naturally growing trees for personal and non-commercial use of tenured migrants, may be allowed	

**COMPARATIVE MATRIX**

CRITERIA	CATEGORIES	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Appropriate Management Zones	Resource Reserve (RR)	watching, trekking, sight seeing, etc.  Scientific research involving only measurements, counts and observations e.g. behavioral studies and census, counts of wildlife	subject to allocation criteria prescribed by PAMB - Research and scientific studies - Biodiversity monitoring
	Natural Biotic Area (NBA)	Resources extraction in a traditional manner, e.g. gathering of food crops, medicine, dyes, fodders for domestic animals including hunting and fishing	Traditional and sustainable resource use
	Strict Nature Reserve (SNR)		Strict Protection and Buffer Zone (SPZ and BZ)
	Natural Park (NP)		- All zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992 except multiple use zones - Multiple use zones shall only be allowed to be established in



**COMPARATIVE MATRIX**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
	<p>Natural Monument (NM)</p> <p>Wildlife Sanctuary (WS)</p> <p>Protected Landscape/ Seascape (PL/S)</p> <p>Resource Reserve (RR)</p> <p>Natural Biotic Area (NBA)</p>		<p>areas with existing human settlements and where social services from the government are available</p> <p>Strict Protection, Cultural, Restoration and Buffer Zones</p> <p>All zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992 except Special Use Zones (SPZ)</p> <p>All Zones defined in DAO 25 S 1992</p> <p>Strict Protection, Cultural, Restoration and Buffer Zones</p> <p>All zones as defined in DAO 25 S 1992</p>