

**DENR Memorandum Circular**  
**No. 35**  
**November 17, 1993**

**SUBJECT : Criteria and Guidelines for the  
Categorization of Protected Areas under the  
National Integrated Protected Areas System  
(NIPAS)**

Pursuant to Section 5 of RA 7586 (NIPAS Act) and Section 3 of DENR Administrative Order No. 25 series of 1992 (NIPAS Implementing Rules and Regulations), and in line with the policy of the government to protect, conserve and maintain the biodiversity of natural resources in the country, the guidelines for the categorization of the components of NIPAS are hereby prescribed.

**Section 1. Title** - This memorandum Circular shall be known as 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 the 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 environment available for scientific study, environmental monitoring, education, and for the 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 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 protect or 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 psychical features of the environment where these may require specific human manipulation for their perpetuation.
- 5) **Protected Landscape/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 lifestyle and economic activity of these areas;
- 6) **Resource Reserves (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 effect the resource pending the establishment of objectives which are based upon appropriate knowledge and planning.
- 7) **Natural Biotic Area/Anthropological Reserve** - in 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 Phil. 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. **Cultural Feature** - This pertains to the presence of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCS) in the area, as defined by Section 4 of the NIPAS Act.

3. **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.
4. **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.

**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** - A report on the categorization of each of the protected areas found suitable for inclusion in NIPAS shall be prepared and submitted by the Regional Offices to the Secretary thru the Director, PAWB for review and proper endorsement for the Secretary's approval. This report shall also include the rationale/justification for the categorization made.

**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.

**ANGEL C. ALCALA**  
Secretary