



DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN & FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



❖ LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS ❖

What are lands with wilderness characteristics?

Lands with wilderness characteristics (outside designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas) are lands where the BLM has identified resource values consistent with the definition of wilderness found in the 1964 Wilderness Act. These areas must be roadless, with more than 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM, or adjacent to existing Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas. They must appear natural, where the imprint of human activity is substantially unnoticeable, and they must have outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The BLM may decide to protect wilderness characteristics where they are found, mitigate impacts from other programs, or manage these areas for other multiple use programs. Through the planning process, the BLM must consider these characteristics equally with other resources such as biological and ecological, cultural, and paleontological resources.

The BLM updated its inventory of wilderness characteristics in 2012 as part of its RMP process. Six areas were identified for inventory, and four areas, the Gunnison Slopes, Dominguez Addition, Dry Fork of Escalante, and Cottonwood Canyon were found to have wilderness characteristics. Map 3-26 in Appendix R shows the areas which were found to have wilderness characteristics. In accordance with Section 201 of the Federal Lands Policy Management Act and BLM Manual 6301, the BLM will continue to maintain its inventory of this resource.

How would the Proposed Plan Alternative manage lands with wilderness characteristics?

The Proposed Plan Alternative would manage Dry Fork of Escalante and Cottonwood Canyon for their wilderness characteristics. In response to public comments on the Draft RMP, the Proposed Plan Alternative has been changed to remove overlapping Recreation Management Area designations and associated objectives. Surface disturbance restrictions were relaxed in order to accommodate trail development or re-routing for primitive recreation as well as livestock management.

Where in the PRMP/FEIS should I look if I'm interested in lands with wilderness characteristics?

Information regarding management of lands with wilderness characteristics can be found starting on line 293 of the alternatives matrix in Chapter 2, Volume 1 of the Proposed RMP. Appendix R contains maps depicting areas in the NCA that would be managed for wilderness characteristics in the Proposed Plan Alternative.