

# UNCOMPAHGRE PLANNING AREA WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY: 2015 UPDATE

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the land use planning process for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan (RMP), the BLM assessed public lands within the Uncompahgre RMP Planning Area (planning area) to determine whether wilderness characteristics are present outside of designated wilderness, existing wilderness study areas (WSAs), and the congressionally-designated Tabeguache Area. The BLM reviewed original 1980 wilderness inventories, as well as lands proposed by BLM staff and the public, in order to identify lands with potential wilderness characteristics.

Of the eight areas identified through the review, seven were found to possess wilderness characteristics. The BLM developed a range of RMP alternatives and analyzed impacts associated with the various management prescriptions designed to protect these characteristics. Decisions could protect all, some (including portions of some), or none of the identified lands.

### **BLM Authority and the Land Use Planning Process**

Land use plans identify broad-scale decisions to guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (1601-1) provides guidance to BLM employees for implementing BLM land use planning requirements. In addition, Appendix C, Section I.K of BLM Handbook 1610-1 (Wilderness Characteristics) directs BLM field offices to identify decisions to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (including sufficient size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation). Specific guidance for inventorying wilderness characteristics is provided through BLM Manual Section 6310, “Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands.” Guidance for “considering wilderness characteristics in the BLM land use planning process” is provided through BLM Manual Section 6320.

While BLM authority to conduct wilderness reviews and establish new wilderness study areas under FLPMA Section 603 expired in 1993, the BLM has authority under FLPMA sections 102

and 201 to maintain a current inventory of all public lands and their resources, including wilderness characteristics. Through the land use planning process, the BLM must consider all available information to determine the mix of resource use and protection that best serves the FLPMA multiple-use mandate.

The management of areas found to possess wilderness characteristics is addressed through the development of a range of RMP alternatives. Within each alternative, the BLM identifies appropriate portions of land and develops effective management strategies (including management prescriptions, stipulations, and allowable uses).

The five existing WSAs within the planning area will continue to be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics under the policy detailed in BLM Manual Section 6330 until Congress designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses.

### **Scope of Assessment**

The BLM considered and evaluated wilderness characteristics for all BLM lands within the planning area outside of existing WSAs and the Tabeguache Area. The assessment did not include national forest lands or BLM lands within the Gunnison Gorge or Dominguez-Escalante national conservation areas.

FLPMA requires that the BLM maintain a current inventory of conditions and resources on public lands, including wilderness characteristics. The last inventory of wilderness characteristics was completed more than thirty years prior to this RMP revision. This update of the UFO wilderness characteristics inventory takes into consideration the possibility that conditions on the ground may have changed during this interval.

In performing this assessment, the UFO:

- 1) Reviewed the 1980 BLM Intensive Wilderness Inventory and updated information when necessary to ensure that information was current and accurate.
- 2) Reviewed proposals to inventory and protect BLM lands with wilderness characteristics submitted by BLM staff and the public.
- 3) Assessed potential lands in the planning area identified through BLM staff and public wilderness proposals or acquired since the 1980 inventory.

### **WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

BLM Manual 6310-1 defines wilderness characteristics as consisting of: 1) sufficient size, 2) naturalness, 3) outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and 4) supplemental values. To have wilderness characteristics, an area must meet each of the first three criteria as described below.

#### **Sufficient Size**

The area is roadless and has over 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM lands, or is of sufficient size to make practicable its use in an unimpaired condition. Areas adjacent to wilderness areas or

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WSAs that are less than 5,000 acres may have wilderness characteristics. State or private lands are not included in making this acreage determination.

### **Roadless Definitions**

For purposes of conducting wilderness characteristics inventories, the BLM uses definitions found on page 17 of House Report 94-1163 (May 15, 1976), released prior to the enactment of FLPMA. In the report, roadless refers to:

...the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

The BLM adopted the following sub-definitions of words and phrases related to roads:

- Improved and maintained: Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. "Improved" does not necessarily mean formal construction. "Maintained" does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
- Mechanical means: Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
- Relatively regular and continuous use: Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, which may entail lengthy return intervals for this purpose; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

A route established or maintained solely by the passage of vehicles would not be considered a road, even if it is used on a relatively regular and continuous basis. Vehicle routes constructed by mechanical means but that are no longer being maintained by mechanical methods are not roads. Sole use of hands and feet to move rocks or dirt without the use of tools or machinery does not meet the definition of "mechanical means." Roads need not be "maintained" on a regular basis but rather "maintained" when road conditions warrant actions to keep it in a usable condition. A dead-end (cherry-stem) road can form the boundary of an inventory area and does not by itself disqualify an area from being considered "roadless."

### **Naturalness**

Lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness when affected primarily by the forces of nature and where the imprint of human activity is substantially unnoticeable (BLM Manual Section 6320).

The naturalness of an area may be influenced by the presence or absence of roads and trails, fences or other developments; the nature and extent of landscape modifications; the presence of native vegetation communities; and the connectivity of habitats. The presence and diversity of wildlife species are recognized as an indicator of naturalness.

Examples of human-made features that may be considered substantially unnoticeable in certain cases are: trails, trail signs, bridges, fire towers, fire breaks, fire pre-suppression facilities, pit toilets, fisheries enhancement facilities, fire rings, hitching posts, snow gauges, water quantity and

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quality measuring devices, research monitoring markers and devices, radio repeater sites, air quality monitoring devices, fencing, spring developments, overgrown and barely visible two-track ways, and small reservoirs.

### **Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation**

#### ***Solitude***

Visitors may have outstanding opportunities for solitude when the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people are rare or infrequent, or where visitors can feel isolated, alone or secluded from others.

#### ***Primitive and Unconfined Recreation***

Visitors may have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation where the use of the area is through non-motorized, non-mechanical means, and where no or minimal developed recreation facilities are encountered.

#### **Supplemental Values**

The area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Supplemental values may be present within the inventory units but are not a required component of wilderness character; they will be described but not used as a mechanism to impact a final finding.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

In accordance with BLM policy outlined in BLM Manual Section 6310, the BLM assessment team:

- Analyzed GIS data to identify blocks of BLM land (1) greater than 5,000 acres or adjacent to a WSA, designated wilderness, or the Tabeguache Area and (2) that do not contain improved and maintained BLM roads, county roads, or highways (wilderness inventory roads).
- Assessed BLM 2013 one-meter aerial imagery and DigitalGlobe World Imagery (30 cm) to eliminate blocks of land that clearly lack wilderness characteristics of naturalness. The most common features indicating a lack of naturalness included obvious vegetative manipulations (such as chaining and rollerchopping) and distinct roads, dams, ditches, seismic exploration lines, and contour furrows.
- Consulted with field staff familiar with assessment areas to elicit additional information and substantiate findings regarding areas eliminated from consideration.
- Conducted field visits in order to verify preliminary findings and complete inventories for qualifying areas.

#### **Assessment Tools**

The BLM assessment team utilized the following tools in evaluating areas for consideration and in completing the wilderness characteristics assessment:

**Past Wilderness Inventories**

The BLM reviewed the 1980 BLM Intensive Wilderness Inventory, Final Wilderness Study Areas report and maps for areas that had been assessed for the presence of wilderness characteristics, but were not included within a WSA. Because the original report documentation was not available, all aspects of an area were considered in this assessment, making it more comprehensive than a simple update.

This review enabled the BLM to determine whether any new information is available that was not considered as part of the original inventories. As the larger landscape experiences population growth and increased development, perceptions regarding what constitutes solitude and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation change. Interest in arid and low elevation environments has also increased. Therefore, some information related to social values submitted by the public was considered “new information” based on changed physical conditions of the land and social perceptions of wilderness characteristics that may have occurred over time.

**Public Wilderness Proposals**

External groups advocate for wilderness designation through legislation and participation in the land use planning process. The BLM considered (in 2010) the most recent proposal for protection of wilderness characteristics submitted by the Colorado Wilderness Network. This coalition is made up of national and statewide organizations (including the Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Mountain Club, Environment Colorado, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and Western Colorado Congress), as well as local citizens groups (including the Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition, High Country Citizens Alliance, Ridgway-Ouray Community Council, San Juan Citizens Alliance, Sheep Mountain Alliance, Wild Connections, and Wilderness Workshop).

In 2013 The Wilderness Society suggested other polygons that may possess wilderness characteristics. They provided basic maps, a shapefile for use in GIS, and a table of suggested areas. The BLM carefully reviewed these areas. The result was the addition of two units that were not included in the 2011 update to the UFO wilderness characteristics inventory: the Adobe Badlands WSA Adjacent Unit and the Lower Tabeguache-Campbell Creek Unit. Both units are included in this inventory update.

**Other Documents and Data**

The following information sources were considered in drafting the assessment:

- Field investigation notes
- Range improvement records (UFO Range Management Specialist and GIS)
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program databases (including potential conservation areas, rare plants, natural plant communities, raptors, and bats)
- Colorado Wilderness Network proposed wilderness GIS data layer (2007)
- Map and correspondence from The Wilderness Society (11/21/2013)
- BLM LR2000 databases (including rights-of-way, mining claims, and oil and gas leasing)

- Dry Creek Travel Management Plan (2009)
- UFO Travel Management Plan (2010)
- UFO road maintenance records
- UFO range allotment management records
- UFO cultural database
- UFO oil and gas lease GIS data sets
- UFO travel and transportation GIS data sets

### ASSESSMENT AREAS

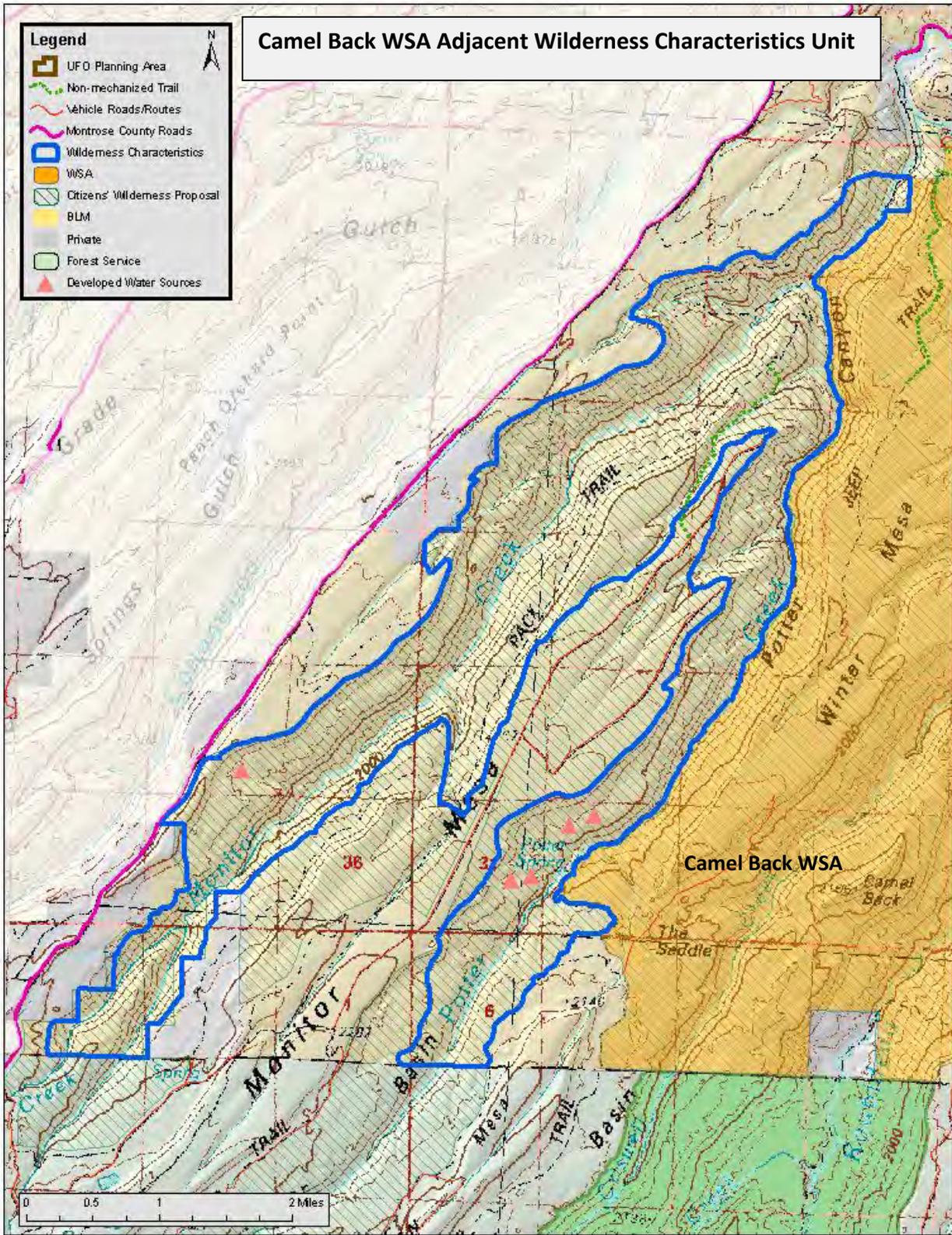
The wilderness characteristics assessment describes known valid existing rights, grandfathered uses, and public land investments within the survey areas. BLM staff verified new information during field surveys.

**Table I** on page 6 identifies the planning area lands detailed within this assessment.

**Table I**  
**Planning Area Lands Assessed for Wilderness Characteristics**

Name	Total Inventoried Acreage*	Acreage with Wilderness Characteristics	Acreage without Wilderness Characteristics
Camel Back WSA Adjacent	8,700	6,950	1,750
Adobe Badlands WSA Adjacent	16,520	6,180	10,340
Lower Tabeguache/Campbell Creek	11,200	11,060	140
Dolores River Canyon WSA Adjacent	32,650	550	32,100
Dry Creek Basin	16,890	7,030	9,850
Roc Creek	7,650	5,480	2,170
Shavano Creek	6,100	4,900	1,200
Norwood Canyon	5,600	0	5,600

\*Reflects total BLM acreage within the planning area submitted by the Colorado Wilderness Network, including acreage within existing WSAs. Acreages generated through GIS mapping may vary due to rounding inconsistencies and different mapping techniques.



**Figure I - Camel Back WSA Adjacent**

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**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-001 Camel Back WSA Adjacent

**Acreage:** 8,700 (includes BLM lands in the Colorado Wilderness Network proposal, exclusive of Camel Back WSA)

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes  No

**Description:**

This unit is contiguous with Camel Back WSA.

The Colorado Wilderness Network proposal includes all BLM lands of Monitor Canyon from rim to rim, most of the BLM lands on Monitor Mesa, except for an area on the south end of the mesa. Also included is Potter Canyon from the WSA boundary on the east, up to the west rim of the canyon formed by Monitor Mesa. The unit is bounded on the north by private land and on the south by US Forest Service land.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

**Description:**

Most of Monitor Mesa shows substantial evidence of human modification. In addition to constructed and maintained routes that run the length of the mesa top, nearly all of the mesa top has undergone mechanical vegetative treatments (e.g., chaining, roller-chopping) that are obvious to a casual observer. For this reason, 1,750 acres of Monitor Mesa has been excluded from the unit.

This leaves 6,950 acres, which include BLM lands in Monitor Canyon from rim to rim, and Potter Canyon from its west rim to the Camel Back WSA boundary in the bottom of Potter Canyon. The unit is bounded on the north by a road and private land and on the south by US Forest Service lands.

Both Monitor and Potter canyons (exclusive of the top of Monitor Mesa) possess a high degree of naturalness. The Camel Back WSA boundary in Potter canyon is defined by an old, impassable vehicle route that runs up the bottom of the canyon. The route was still in use when the WSA was established, but has long since fallen into disuse, and was closed by BLM's Dry Creek Transportation Plan (2009). It is no longer passable for any type of vehicle, and occasional flooding in Potter Creek together with growth of riparian vegetation is reclaiming the old route. While a person on the ground could still find evidence of the old road it is substantially unnoticeable

in the unit as a whole. From the WSA boundary in the bottom of Potter Creek up to the west rim of Potter Canyon the terrain is rugged and steep with rocky outcrops and ledges. Potter Creek has perennial flows. There are four small stock ponds on a bench about halfway up the slope, but they do not significantly detract from the overall naturalness.

The unit includes all BLM lands in Monitor Canyon from rim to rim. It is characterized by steep, broken cliffs and ledges with a perennial stream in the bottom. An old abandoned mineral exploration route exists in a side-drainage on the northwest side of the canyon. Though it was originally constructed, there has been no maintenance or vehicle use on the route for many years, and it is slowly weathering away. It is somewhat noticeable from certain vantage points, but does not dominate the setting. There is one small stock pond on the southwest bench of the canyon that is occasionally maintained via a short ATV access trail. The trail is open to administrative use, but closed to public use. The canyon as a whole is predominately natural appearing.

A stock trail runs from near the confluence of Monitor and Potter Creeks up the northern ridge of Monitor Mesa and onto the mesa. The portion of the trail ascending the steeper, rocky layers was originally built with mechanized equipment, likely a bulldozer. This trail is actively used by the grazing permittee, but only for driving cattle, which is accomplished on horseback. The trail is regularly maintained with hand tools to ensure its continued use. It's clearly visible from certain vantage points, but since it is a local, linear feature (as opposed to a broad area) it does not dominate the scene, and does not detract from the overall naturalness of the unit.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude):

With the high topographic relief, rugged terrain and lack of vehicular access outstanding opportunities for solitude exist in this unit. In the canyon bottoms, where most hiking and equestrian use occurs, the riparian vegetation provides excellent visual and aural screening.

Recreational use is mostly light in this unit, with an increase in use during the hunting season. With light use and ample size, one mostly feels alone on a large landscape. Contacts with other visitors are rare.

The closest major metropolitan area is Denver, CO, approximately 275 miles distant (by car). Grand Junction, CO (pop. 60,000) is 40 miles distant. Montrose, Delta, and Olathe are all within 20 miles of the unit and have a combined population of approximately 25,000.

The unit is approximately 10 miles from the Delta County airport, and 18 miles from the Montrose airport (measured to the nearest point). Montrose airport is the busiest airport in the area with several commercial jet flights arriving and departing each day during the busy season. The busy season is primarily the ski season in Telluride, which extends from November through April in a typical year. Typical flight paths in and out of local airports do not pass over this unit, so impacts from low-flying aircraft are not common.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes   X              No \_\_\_\_\_            N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

All recreational use of the area is non-motorized and non-mechanized. Primary activities are backpacking, day hiking, equestrian use, and hunting. There are few trails, and no recreational facilities in the area. All use is self-directed and requires basic backcountry travel and map-reading or GPS skills.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes   X              No \_\_\_\_\_            N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

Monitor Creek contains areas of Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac riparian woodland (*Populus deltoides* spp. *Wislizeni/Rhus trilobata*) which is classified as globally imperiled by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). It also contains a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of the common coyote willow riparian shrubland (*Salix exigua*/mesic graminoids). It also provides habitat connectivity between the higher elevation forested lands on the Uncompahgre Plateau to the lower elevation desert scrub lands at the lower end of the unit. This is important especially for seasonal wildlife migrations.

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### Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-001 Camel Back WSA Adjacent  
**Summary**

Results of analysis:

Of the 8,700 acres analyzed, 6,950 acres have wilderness characteristics.

Most of Monitor Mesa shows substantial evidence of human modification. In addition to constructed and maintained routes that run the length of the mesa top, nearly all of the mesa top has undergone mechanical vegetative treatments (e.g., chaining, roller-chopping) that are obvious to a casual observer. For this reason, most of Monitor Mesa has been excluded from the unit.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes  No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes  No  N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

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Blake Treadway, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Debbie Burch, BLM Range Technician

(Name, Title, Date)

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

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*(Signature)*

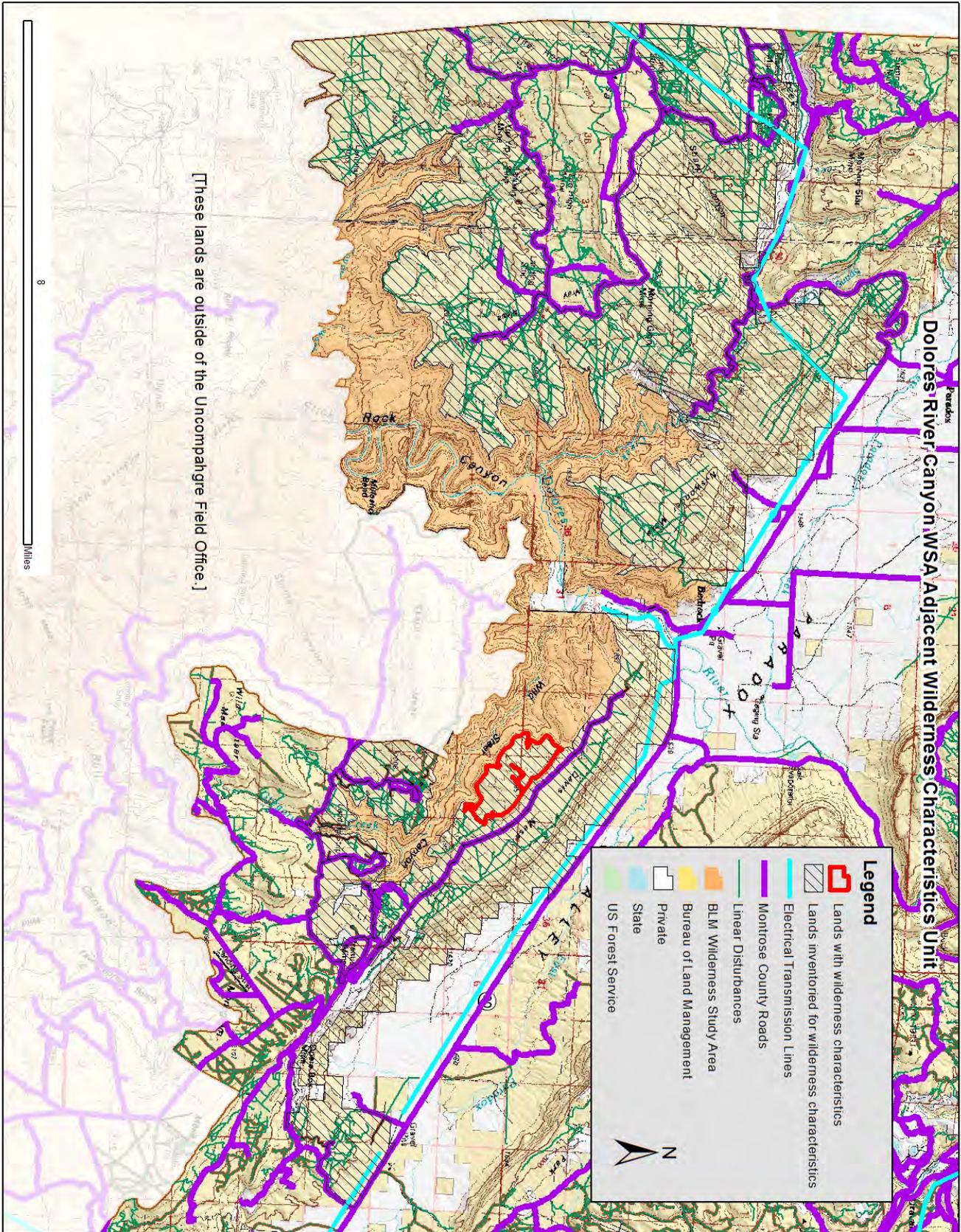
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*(Name and Title)*

\* This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

Figure 2 - Dolores River Canyon WSA Addition



**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-002 Dolores River Canyon WSA Adjacent  
**Acreage:** 32,650

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes  No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

Unit is adjacent to the Dolores River Canyon WSA. It includes Nyswonger Mesa, Wray Mesa and Davis Mesa.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

Some lands within the unit on Davis Mesa between the WSA boundary on the northeast side of Wild Steer Canyon and Montrose County Road DD16 are natural in appearance with few signs of human-caused alterations to the natural landscape.

Wray Mesa, Nyswonger Mesa and the remainder of Davis Mesa lack naturalness, due to human modifications including county roads, power transmission lines and other linear ground disturbances (mineral exploration routes, vehicle routes, and an airstrip).

31,790 acres were found to lack naturalness, leaving 860 acres that appear to be natural.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

Of the remaining area of the unit that possesses naturalness, much is located between road DD16 and the rim above the road on its southwest side. This area is a narrow strip of land and close to the county road. This strip varies from 0.10 to 0.25 miles in width, with the bulk of the unit overlooking the county road. Opportunities for solitude are poor in most of this area.

A 550-acre bench (shown on the attached map inside the blue outline) has opportunities for solitude because most of that area is below and out of direct line of sight of vehicle routes. However since most of the area is within 0.5 miles of the vehicle routes, the opportunities are not outstanding.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes   X              No                       N/A           

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

A 550-acre bench (shown on the attached map inside the blue outline) has opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation because most of that area is below and out of direct line of sight of vehicle routes. The opportunities would be outstanding in connection with the existing WSA.

All travel in this area is by non-motorized/non-mechanized means.

The area has no developed recreation facilities.

Since it is adjacent to the Dolores River Canyon WSA a dominant impression of an observer is that it is part of a great expanse of wild country. In particular, the view from the edge of this area overlooking Wild Steer Canyon is wild and dramatic. A person with proper gear and primitive outdoor travel skills would feel compelled to explore this area and continue into the WSA.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes                       No   X              N/A           

Description:

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## Summary of Analysis\*

### **Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-002 Dolores River Canyon WSA Adjacent **Summary**

Results of analysis:

Much of the originally proposed unit lacks naturalness, and/or outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, or possesses a combination of deficiencies.

Nyswonger Mesa and Wray Mesa have high densities of old vehicle routes and linear surface disturbances. Few of the routes have been maintained for many years and have fallen into disuse. They are not “roads” as defined in this wilderness characteristics inventory process. They are however wide-spread and substantially noticeable human-made (unnatural) modifications to the land. Nyswonger Mesa and Wray Mesa do not possess naturalness, and therefore do not possess wilderness characteristics.

Much of Davis Mesa, northwest of Wild Steer Canyon, has similar deficiencies preventing it from possessing wilderness characteristics. The north end of Davis Mesa (outside the WSA) has a two vehicle routes in a fairly constrained area, and therefore does not possess naturalness. The southeast end of the proposed unit on Davis Mesa also has a density of vehicle routes that precludes naturalness.

Also on Davis Mesa there are long narrow strips of land in the Colorado Wilderness Network proposal between Montrose County Road DD16 and the WSA boundary. Because these lands are topographically isolated between the cliff line of the WSA and the county road, they do not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

One 550-acre unit was found that is adjacent to the WSA that possesses wilderness characteristics. The unit is bounded as follows:

- By unnamed BLM roads on the northeast and southeast; and
- By the WSA on the northwest and southwest.
- It is found in parts of the sections listed in the following townships;
  - 46N 18W, Sec 2, 3, and 4
  - 47N 18W, Sec 33 and 34

There is just over a half mile of road that extends in a forked prong into the unit. It has been cherry-stemmed out of the unit. See attached map.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes      \_\_\_ No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

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Yes       No       N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?       Yes       No       N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

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**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

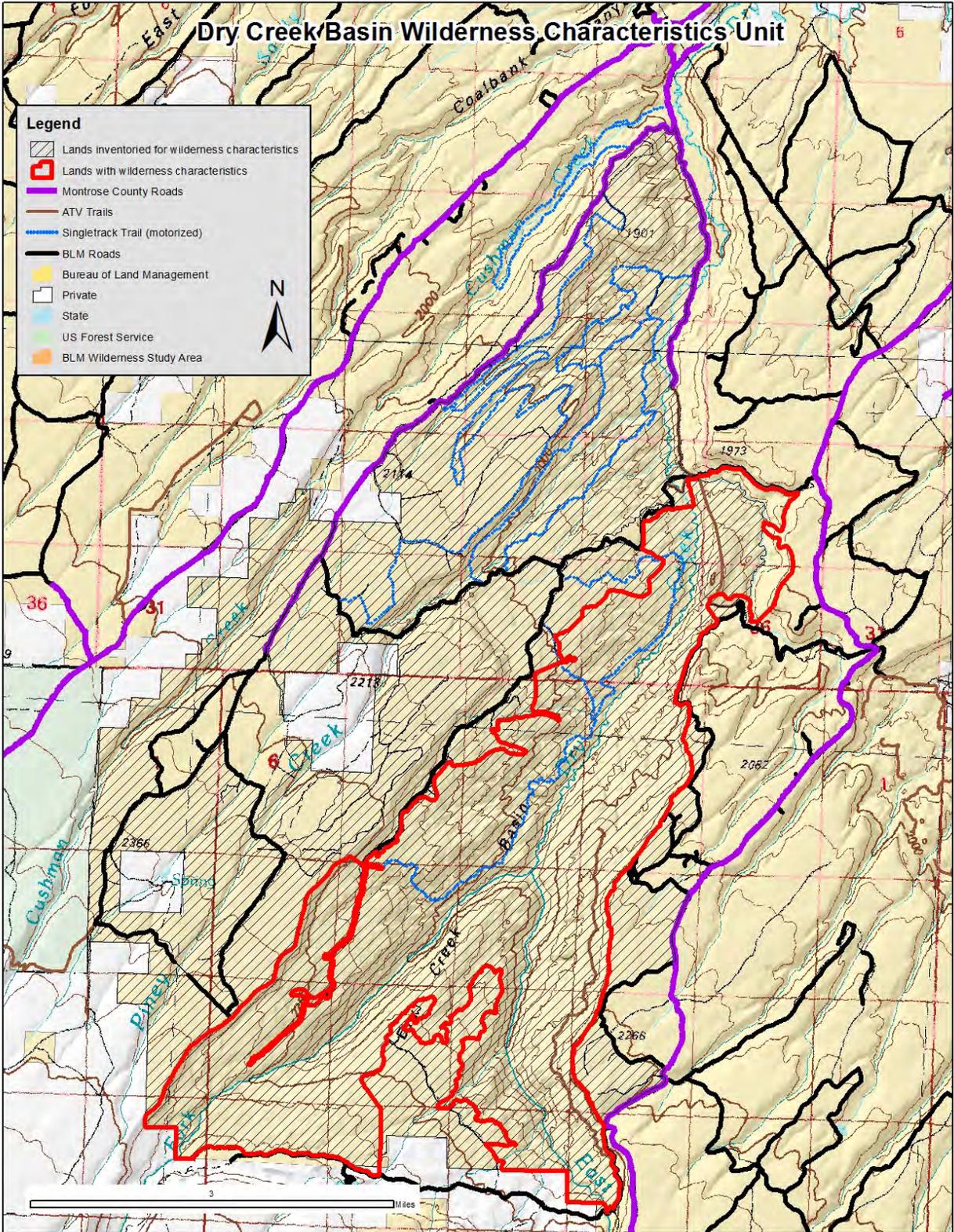
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*(Date)*

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*(Name and Title)*

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Figure 3 - Dry Creek Basin



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**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-003 Dry Creek Basin

**Acreage:** 16,890

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes  No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

Unit is bounded as follows:

- On the north by the Tabeguache Trail;
- On the west by Cushman Mesa Road, USFS land and private land;
- On the south by Olathe Reservoir Road and private land; and
- On the east by vehicle routes and Rim Road.

1,000 acres in upper Piney Creek and Cushman Mesa in the southwest part of the unit were excluded due to the presence of wilderness inventory roads that access a private parcel and water developments, leaving 15,890 acres in the unit.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

The remainder of the northwest part of the unit in the Cushman Mesa and Piney Creek areas (7,750 acres) lacks naturalness due to the presence of a dense network of vehicle routes, vegetative manipulations (chaining/roller-chopping and seedings), water catchments and other range developments. Likewise, at the south end of the unit 600 acres were excluded due to lack of naturalness because of the presence of roads and vegetative manipulation on the mesa between the East and West forks of Dry Creek.

The remaining 7,740 acres in the unit are natural in appearance overall with few signs of human alteration.

The remainder is comprised primarily of the drainages of the East and West forks of Dry Creek, and Dry Creek itself, below their confluence (with some lands between the east rim of Dry Creek Basin and Rim Road).

The unit takes in elevations of 8,000 feet on the higher southern end, and drops to 6,000 at the lower end of the creek to the north. The south portion supports ponderosa pine forest and mountain shrub lands on the benches above the creeks. The creeks themselves are perennial and support lush riparian vegetation of cottonwood, skunkbush, and willow. As the elevation descends toward the north the benches above the creek give way to pinyon-juniper forest, sagebrush flats and desert scrub, while the riparian zone associated with Dry Creek continues to be dominated by cottonwood trees.

Because this is a relatively undisturbed and natural landscape connecting higher elevation forest with more desert-like lowlands, this unit is an important wildlife migration corridor.

There is a 3-mile ATV trail on the bench on the east side of the East Fork of Dry Creek, and a 1-mile section of ATV trail crossing the northern portion of the unit. A two-mile section of constructed and maintained road above the West Fork of Dry Creek has been cherry-stemmed out of the unit.

There are about 5 miles of motorized single-track trails on the bench on the west side of Dry Creek. These routes are maintained open routes and are clearly visible as such for an observer following them. Because the tread is narrow (particularly on the single-track) and the vehicles using them are relatively light, they are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

There is one small spring development near the southwest boundary of the unit.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

**Description:**

About 710 acres of the unit between the east rim of Dry Creek Basin and Rim Road do not have outstanding opportunities for solitude. These lands consist of about 5 different polygons sandwiched between the rim and either BLM roads or Rim Road. Because of their close proximity to roads and their poor screening from roads opportunities for solitude in these areas are not outstanding.

The remaining 7,030 acres of this unit do have outstanding opportunities for solitude. The remainder has moderately rugged topography. The incised creek bottoms are the most topographically isolated areas of the unit. Good vegetative screening exists in all of the riparian zone, and the pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine uplands.

There is motorized and mechanized access into the unit. A 3-mile ATV trail runs along the bench above the East Fork of Dry Creek, and is used primarily for seasonal hunting activities. During hunting season use is moderate to heavy.

A 2-mile road spur is cherry-stemmed out of the unit on the west bench above West Fork of Dry Creek. While this road is excluded from the unit it could negatively affect perceptions of

solitude for the adjacent lands within the unit. The road accesses a developed spring and trough, and provides full-size vehicle access to the area. The road is primarily used for grazing allotment management and for seasonal hunting access. During hunting season, use is moderate. The route is lightly used outside the hunting season.

About 5 miles of motorized single-track trail exists on the west bench of Dry Creek, mostly on the northern half of the unit. This is primarily used for recreational trail riding in the spring and fall. Motorized and mechanized use of these trails is moderate in spring and fall, and light in summer and winter.

The vehicle routes mentioned above would have a localized negative effect on perceptions of solitude during their primary seasons of use, but those effects would not be enough to preclude outstanding opportunities for solitude throughout most of the unit.

The size of the unit and vegetative and topographic screening provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The whole unit is within a basin defined by the upper rim of the canyon formed by Dry Creek, and is therefore isolated from the surrounding lands, which are laced with vehicle routes.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes   X              No \_\_\_\_\_            N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The unit is well-suited for self-directed hiking, horseback use, and non-motorized/non-mechanized hunting use.

Despite the vehicle routes mentioned in section 3 (above) access to the vast majority of the unit is only by foot or horseback. The entire riparian zone up the main stem and both forks of Dry Creek is only accessible by foot or horse back.

Except for trails, no developed recreation facilities exist in this unit.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes   X              No \_\_\_\_\_            N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

This area provides important wildlife habitat connectivity between the higher elevation forested lands on the Uncompahgre Plateau at the south end of the unit and the lower elevation lands to the north.

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## Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-003 Dry Creek Basin

### Summary

Results of analysis:

This unit was identified by BLM through a review and update of the UFO wilderness characteristics inventory as required by FLPMA Sec 201. The Wilderness Society later suggested that BLM consider this area.

The singletrack motorized trails and two ATV trails within the unit are currently at a low level of use that is consistent with the findings of naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The Dry Creek Transportation Plan (2009) designated these routes.

The area found to possess wilderness characteristics is 7,030 acres in size.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes      \_\_\_ No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?       Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

\_\_\_ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

### Prepared by (team members):

Edd Franz, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Lynae Rogers, BLM Range Management Specialist

Debbie Burch, BLM Range Technician

Barbara Sharrow, BLM Uncompahgre Field Office Manager

Julie Jackson, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Blake Treadway, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Barney Buria, BLM Environmental Protection Specialist

**(Name, Title, Date)**

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

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*(Signature)*

---

*(Date)*

---

*(Name and Title)*

\* This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

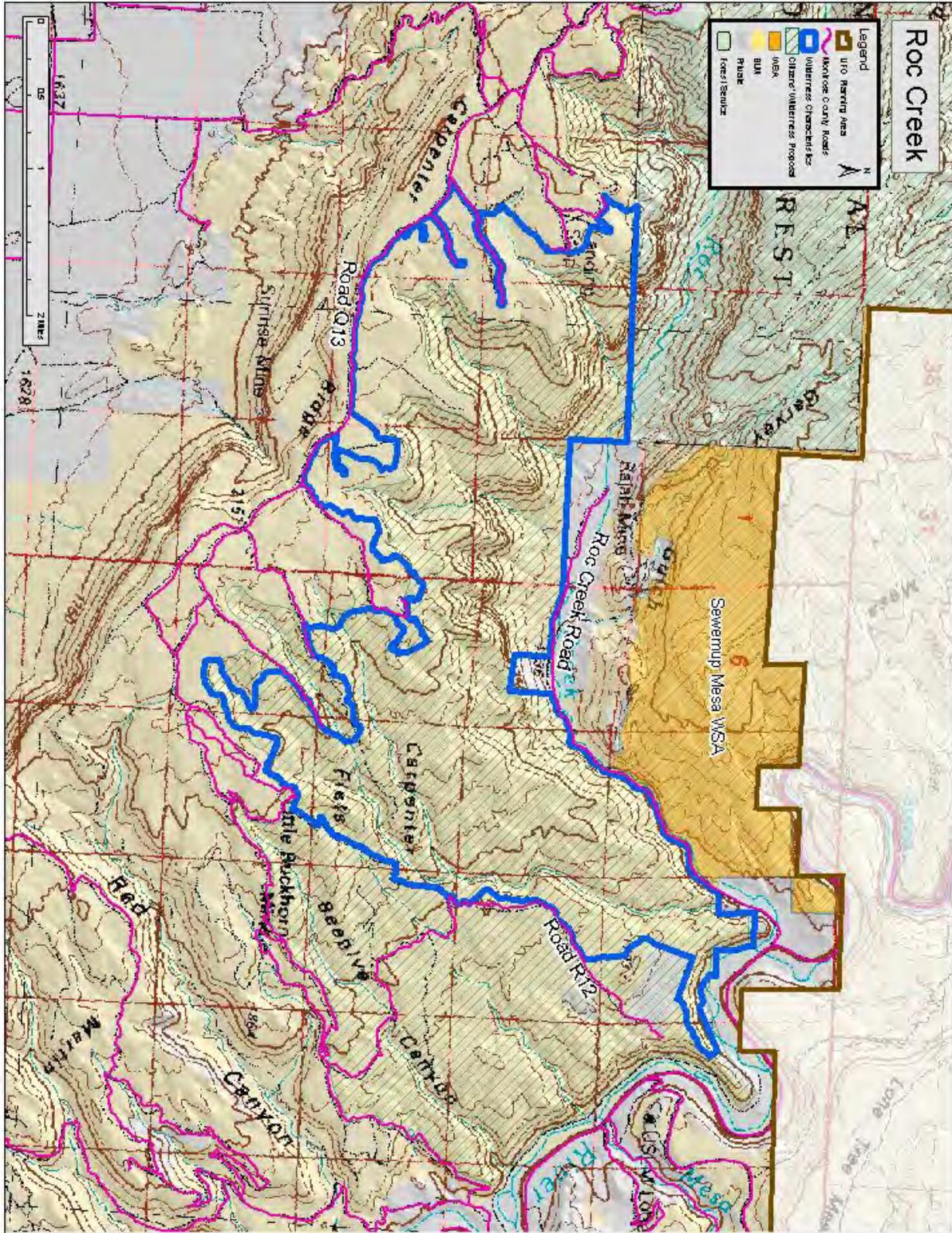


Figure 4 - Roc Creek

**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics****Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-004 Roc Creek**Acreage:** 7,650

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes  No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

This unit is near, but not contiguous with, Sewemup Mesa WSA.

Unit is bounded as follows:

- on the east and northeast by private land and the Dolores River;
- on the north by private land, US Forest Service land, and Roc Creek Road;
- on the southwest, south and southeast by Montrose County Road Q13.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

Of the original 7,650 acres inventoried, 5,480 acres are natural in appearance. The southeast part of the inventory unit in the upper Beehive Canyon/Carpenter Flats area contains many vehicle routes and linear disturbances remaining from past mineral exploration. That part of the unit is not natural in appearance to a casual observer.

Within the remaining natural-appearing part of the unit there is an old vehicle route that enters from the southwest boundary, off of Montrose County Road S8, and continues in a northeast direction. The route shows signs of mechanical construction, but has been abandoned and unused for a number of years. Trees and brush are growing in the former route. Because it is neither used nor maintained, it does not meet the definition of "road" as defined for the purpose of this wilderness characteristics inventory. It is still quite noticeable to an observer walking along its route, but it is substantially unnoticeable from almost any other vantage point, and does not detract from the naturalness of the unit as a whole.

The south and southwest boundary of the remaining (natural appearing) acres of the unit is defined by Montrose County Road Q13 and several road spurs that have been "cherry-stemmed" out of the unit. While the lands inside the boundary appear to be natural, an observer has the

feeling of being around several noticeable roads, especially when in the vicinity of the cherry-stems.

The main part of the unit is comprised primarily of steep terrain, draining toward the north into Roc Creek. Vegetation is predominantly pinyon-juniper forest.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

The unit is comprised primarily of rugged, steep topography and dense pinyon-juniper forest. Both the topography and vegetation provide excellent screening for an enhanced sense of solitude. It is also far from populated areas and receives very light recreational use. The unit is more than 90 road-miles from Moab, Grand Junction and Montrose. These factors combine to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude in the unit.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The unit is only accessible by foot or on horseback, and has no recreational facilities.

The forested ridges and slopes leading into deep and rocky canyons form a landscape that is outstandingly suited to primitive and unconfined recreational activities, especially for those seeking self-directed and challenging hiking, backpacking, or horseback riding.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

The unit has highly scenic views from the bluffs overlooking the deep drainages within the unit.

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## Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-004 Roc Creek

### Summary

Results of analysis:

The original proposal from the Colorado Wilderness Network included Sewemup Mesa WSA and BLM lands in both Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices, as well as US Forest service lands in the Roc Creek vicinity. This inventory focuses on BLM lands outside of existing WSAs and designated wilderness, all within the Uncompahgre Field Office planning area.

The proposal within the Uncompahgre Field Office, exclusive of WSA acres comes to 7,650 acres of BLM lands. The adjacent US Forest Service lands were not considered because they are not administratively endorsed for wilderness protection.

250 acres on the west side of the remaining proposal were dropped because they were non-contiguous with the remainder of the unit.

An additional 2,170 acres around Beehive Canyon and the southern and eastern part of Carpenter Flats were dropped from consideration because they lack naturalness. Numerous vehicle routes create a network of unnatural disturbances in those areas. Montrose County Road R12 forms part of the boundary of the remaining Roc Creek wilderness characteristics unit.

The remaining unit is 5,480 acres in size.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes      \_\_\_ No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?       Yes      \_\_\_ No      \_\_\_ N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

\_\_\_ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

### Prepared by (team members):

Edd Franz, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Bruce Krickbaum, BLM Planner

Dean Stindt, BLM Range Management Specialist  
Barbara Sharrow, BLM Uncompahgre Field Office Manager  
Julie Jackson, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Barney Buria, BLM Environmental Protection Specialist

**(Name, Title, Date)**

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Date)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name and Title)*

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**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-005 Shavano Creek

**Acreage:** 6,090

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check “Yes” and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes  No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

This unit is just north of the congressionally designated Tabeguache Area. They are separated by Montrose County Road V24, and therefore are not adjacent.

The unit is bounded as follows:

- On the south by Montrose County Road V24;
- On the east by vegetative manipulations (chaining/roller-chopping), private land and US Forest Service land;
- On the north by vegetative manipulations (chaining/roller-chopping), private land, and US Forest Service land; and
- On the west by Montrose County Roads Z26 and U472, and associated roadside disturbances.

The inventory included lands in upper Campbell Creek drainage north and west of Road U475 up to Road U472 in West Campbell Creek. During field inspection it was noted that Road U475 was originally mechanically constructed (likely by bulldozer), and since it provides the only access for maintenance of a stock pond, it will continue to be mechanically maintained. In 2004 the Campbell Creek Fire burned through the area. Now trees burnt in that fire are starting to drop across the road and will be cleared using chainsaws in order to continue to maintain the stock pond. Because of this, U475 meets the definition of “road” for the purpose of the wilderness characteristics inventory, and therefore the lands in upper Campbell Creek were not included in this unit.

There is a range access route that enters the unit from the west side off of Montrose County Road Z26. It runs northeast, adjacent to Shavano Creek, and terminates about 2.5 miles in. The route was mechanically constructed (likely by bulldozer), but is no longer used by full-size vehicles. There is evidence of some ATV use, likely for range-management and/or hunting purposes. There is no sign of mechanical maintenance of this route, and it is becoming an ATV trail rather than a full-size vehicle route. Since this route does not meet the definition of a “road” for the purposes of this wilderness characteristics inventory, it was left in the unit rather than being cherry-stemmed out.

A two mile long vehicle route enters the unit from Montrose County Road V24 along the southern boundary of the unit. Both ends of the route terminate at Road V24. The route was originally mechanically constructed (likely by bulldozer) but for the most part has not been maintained in many years. There is a stock pond which is accessed from the western terminus of the route about 0.3 miles in. The road is passable by full size vehicle to this point, and is maintained for access for pond maintenance. Other than that section the route has severely slumped and eroded to the point that it is impassable, even to an ATV. Therefore the only section that meets the wilderness characteristics definition of "road" is the western 0.3 miles. That section is cherry-stemmed out of the unit.

Even though the remainder of this unit is 4,900 acres (100 acres shy of the 5,000 acre minimum guideline) it is very close (98%), and is of sufficient size to make practicable its management in an unimpaired condition.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Although the unit does contain the two vehicle routes described under Question 1, neither is substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. Where the ATV trail parallels Shavano Creek, it is clearly noticeable to an observer hiking in the drainage, but in the unit as a whole it is substantially unnoticeable.

The unit provides for important habitat continuity especially for seasonal wildlife migration. The upper end of the unit is around 7,000 feet in elevation and connects with even higher elevation forest lands on the Uncompahgre Plateau, while the lower end of the unit drains into Tabeguache Creek at about the 5,000 foot level, which in turn connects with the San Miguel and Dolores Rivers.

Most of the unit is covered in pinyon-juniper forest, with some ponderosa pine in the upper reaches and cottonwoods and willows in the riparian areas of Shavano Creek. In 2004, the Campbell Creek wildfire burned through the upper reaches in the northeast portion of the unit. There are many standing-dead trees that were burnt in the fire, with a robust understory of grasses, forbs and sagebrush. Even though it is obvious that a fire burned through that area, wildfire is a natural phenomenon so the area is still natural in appearance.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

The unit lies in a remote, lightly populated area of western Colorado, far from metropolitan areas.

The topography is moderately steep throughout much of the unit. The exception being the upper reaches of the Campbell Canyon burn, which is gently undulating terrain.

Both the topography and rather dense pinyon-juniper forest provide ample screening for visitors to the area. The exception to this again is the Campbell Canyon burn area in the northeast portion of the unit, where there is not much in the way of either.

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding throughout the unit, regardless of screening because visitation to the area is very light. This is partially due to the fact that road access along much of the boundary does not exist or goes through private property with locked gates.

Sights, sounds or evidence of other people are rare in this unit.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes   X              No                       N/A           

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

There does not appear to be much recreational use of this area at all. The recreational use that does occur seems to be concentrated near the boundary roads. With its proximity to the more dramatic landscape and more dependable water sources of the Tabeguache Area, this area is unlikely to become a recreational destination.

There are no developed recreational facilities in the unit.

Except for the one ATV trail, all access to this unit is by non-motorized/non-mechanized means.

There are abundant opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities for non-motorized/non-mechanized hunting in this unit are outstanding.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes   X              No                       N/A           

Description:

This area provides important habitat connectivity between the higher elevation forested lands on the Uncompahgre Plateau at the northeast end of the unit and the lower elevation lands to the southwest.

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### Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-005 Shavano Creek

**Summary**

Results of analysis:

This unit is just north of the congressionally designated Tabeguache Area. They are separated by Montrose County Road V24, and therefore are not adjacent.

1,190 acres were excluded from the initial inventory area when it was found that Road U475 is a constructed and maintained road, and therefore formed a new boundary for the unit. That left 4,900 acres that possess wilderness characteristics.

Even though the remainder of this unit is 100 acres shy of the 5,000 acre minimum guideline it is very close (98%), and is of sufficient size to make practicable its management in an unimpaired condition.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes  No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes  No  N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

Edd Franz, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Bruce Krickbaum, BLM Planner

Dean Stindt, BLM Range Management Specialist

Barbara Sharrow, BLM Uncompahgre Field Office Manager

Julie Jackson, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

Barney Buria, BLM Environmental Protection Specialist

**(Name, Title, Date)**

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

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*(Signature)*

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*(Date)*

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*(Name and Title)*

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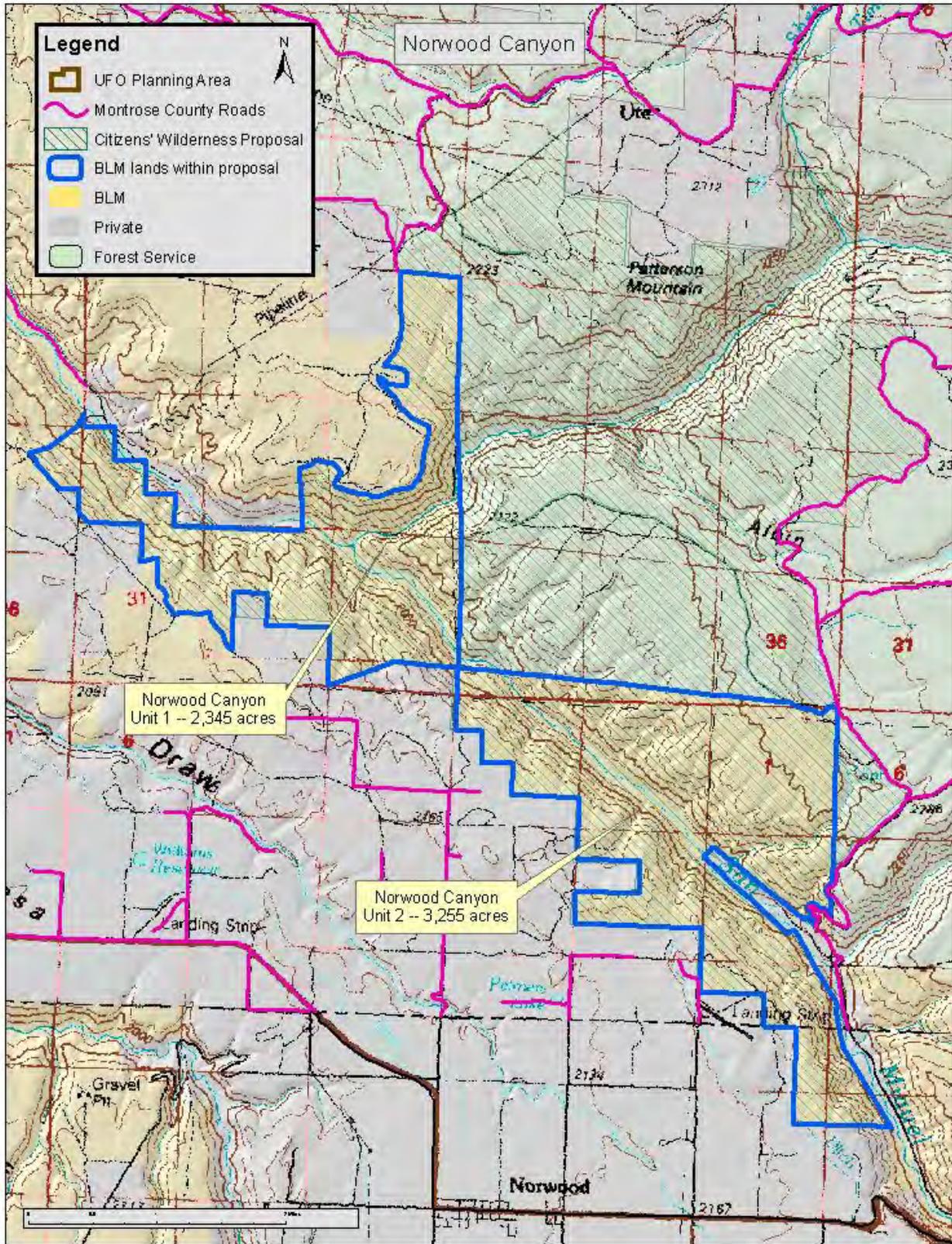


Figure 6 - Norwood Canyon

**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics****Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-006 Norwood Canyon**Acreage:** 5,600

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  \_\_\_\_\_

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

The Colorado Wilderness Network proposal for the Norwood Canyon unit includes USFS lands. This wilderness characteristics inventory is limited to BLM lands within the RMP planning area. This constraint affects both the size and configuration (shape) of the unit.

Because at the approximate center of the BLM portion of the unit, the boundary constricts to a single point (see map above), this creates two separate, non-adjacent polygons, neither of which meets the minimum size requirement for BLM to continue analyzing them for wilderness characteristics. To meet size requirements an area must usually have 5,000 or more contiguous acres.

If the adjacent USFS lands that are included in the CWP were administratively endorsed by the USFS for wilderness protection, then we could have included those adjacent acres as part of the size analysis. Because those lands have no recommendation from the USFS for wilderness protection, they cannot be included in the BLM analysis.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A  X

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A  X

Description:

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### Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-006 Norwood Canyon

**Summary**

Results of analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes  No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes  No  N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

Edd Franz, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner

**(Name, Title, Date)**

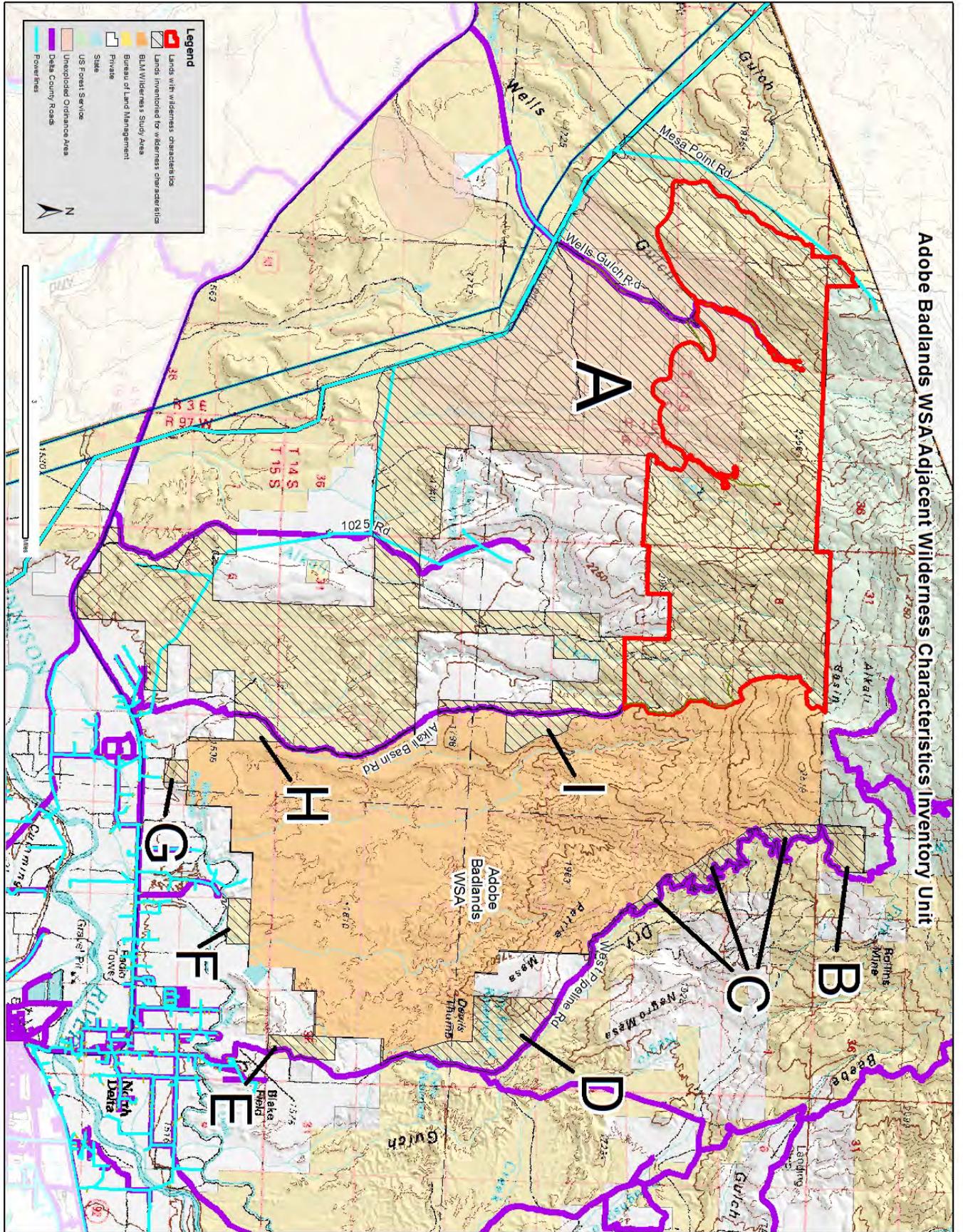
**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Title)

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**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**Area Unique Identifier **CO-S05000-007 Adobe Badlands WSA Adjacent**Acreage **16,520 acres**

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes  No 

Description: This unit consists of public lands surrounding Adobe Badlands WSA, near the city of Delta, CO.

The largest subunit (subunit A [15,230 acres] on the map) is bordered on the north by Grand Mesa National Forest; on the west by Mesa Point Road; on south by the Western Energy Corridor right-of-way, US Highway 50, and by private land; and on the east by Alkali Basin Road and Adobe Badlands WSA. The northern 3 miles of Alkali Basin Road is no longer maintained and does not meet the criteria of a wilderness inventory road. Therefore, this subunit is adjacent to Adobe Badlands WSA. The lower, southern part of the subunit is open salt-desert shrub/grass lands consisting of flat benches separated by moderately incised parallel drainages. The northern part of the subunit is piñon-juniper woodlands, and is more varied topographically than the lower part of the subunit. This area features rocky bluffs and steep terrain. The upper reaches of Alkali Creek within this subunit support riparian vegetation. The southernmost 940 acres of this subunit are separated from the rest of the subunit by powerlines. This piece is excluded from the subunit, and does not meet any of the size criteria. This leaves 14,290 acres in subunit A that meet the size criteria based on acreage and adjacency.

Subunit B (130 acres) is located near the northeast corner of the WSA, and is separated from the WSA by West Pipeline Road, a constructed and maintained road. It is therefore not adjacent to the WSA and does not meet any of the size criteria.

Subunit C (280 acres) is located between the eastern boundary of the WSA and West Pipeline Road. The northern portion of this subunit consists of piñon-juniper woodlands, and the southern part is generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands. Though it is small in size, it meets the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunit D (440 acres) is located between the eastern boundary of the WSA and West Pipeline Road. It is generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands, dominated by Dry Fork Reservoir. Though it is small in size, it meets the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunits E (100 acres), F (80 acres) and G (40 acres) are each small parcels along the southern and southeastern border of the WSA. Each is separated from the WSA by

---

powerlines and associated constructed and maintained maintenance roads. They are therefore not adjacent to the WSA, and do not meet any of the size criteria.

Subunits H (70 acres) and I (150 acres) are located between Alkali Basin Road and the WSA boundary. They are both generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands. Though they are both small in size, they meet the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunits A, C, D, H and I meet the size criteria. Their combined acreage (15,230) is carried forward for further analysis, below.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

In subunit A (14,290 acres) most of the southern half of the subunit has an unnatural appearance. From the vicinity of Wells Gulch Road south of the road's switchbacks, and south and east to Alkali Basin Road the area shows significant alteration from natural conditions. Evidence of lack of naturalness includes ponds, contour furrows, water catchments, constructed and maintained roads, other vehicle routes, canals, and altered contouring of natural drainages. 6,910 acres of subunit A do not possess naturalness, leaving 7,380 acres that appear to be natural. Much of the western part of this subunit is within an "unexploded ordinance area" (UXO). The area was used in the past as an artillery training area, and a number of unexploded shells have been recovered. An unknown number remain in the subunit. Nearly all of this subunit is leased for oil and gas.

Although subunit C (280 acres) has a few vehicle routes within the subunit, they do not dominate the area. On the whole, the entire subunit appears to be natural.

Subunit D (440 acres) is dominated by Dry Fork Reservoir, vehicle maintenance routes, drainage-capture structures, fences and weeds. The entire subunit lacks naturalness.

Subunits H (70 acres) and I (150 acres) are both dominated by alterations related to stock pond developments (excavations, dams and water-capture contouring). Both subunits lack naturalness.

The remainder of subunit A (7,380 acres) and subunit C (280 acres) appear to be natural and are carried forward for further analysis below. Their combined acreage is 7,660 acres.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to

unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

The western portion of subunit A is mostly flat, open shrublands that are close to Mesa Point Road, a major power corridor, and its associated access roads. Solitude is the absence of sights and sounds of other people; with very little topographic or vegetative screening, this area (1,200 acres) lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. The remainder of the unit (6,180 acres) offers both topographic and vegetative screening, and is more remote from the sights and sounds of others, and does offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Subunit C (280 acres) is entirely within close proximity to West Pipeline Road, which comprises most of the subunit's boundary. No part of the subunit is more than 1,000 feet from the road, and most of it is much closer. This subunit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The total acreage with outstanding opportunities for solitude is 6,180.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The western portion of subunit A is mostly flat, open shrublands that are close to Mesa Point Road, a major power corridor, and its associated access roads. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation means a lack of recreational developments, minimal regulation of recreational use, and access via primitive (non-motorized and non-mechanized) means. Although this portion of subunit A has no recreation developments and minimal regulation of recreational use, because of the adjacent roads and developments the access to this portion of the subunit is primarily by motorized and mechanized means. While opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation still exist in this corner of the subunit, the opportunities are not outstanding, therefore 1,200 acres of subunit A do not possess this characteristic. The remainder of the unit (6,180 acres) is removed from roads, does not have recreation developments, and is minimally regulated, and therefore does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Subunit C (280 acres) is entirely within close proximity to West Pipeline Road, which comprises most of the subunit's boundary. No part of the subunit is more than 1,000 feet from the road, and most of it is much closer. Although there are opportunities for unconfined recreation, this subunit does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation.

The total acreage with outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation is 6,180.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes   X              No                       N/A           

Description:

The area contains part of the Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

**Summary of Analysis\***

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**Area Unique Identifier: Adobe Badlands WSA Adjacent CO-05000-007****Summary**

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes \_\_\_ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The acreage of lands with wilderness characteristics within the unit is 6,180.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

Edd Franz, Outdoor Rec Planner, 5-15-2014

Chuck Lassiter, Park Ranger, 5-15-2014

Lynae Rogers, Rangeland Management Specialist, 5-15-2014

Bruce Krickbaum, Planner, 5-15-2014

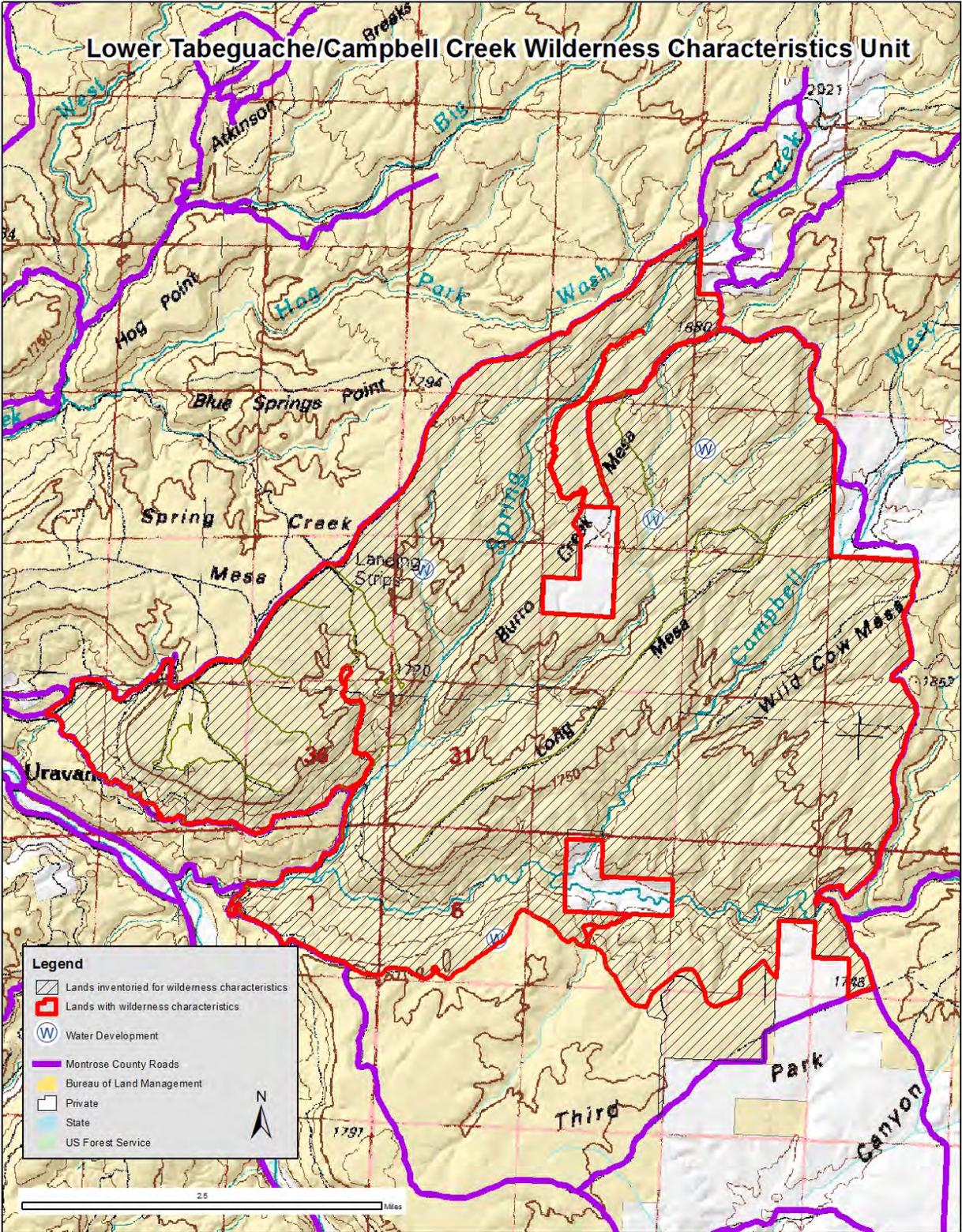
Teresa Pfifer, Lands and Minerals Supervisor, 5-15-2014

Barbara Sharrow, Field Office Manager

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**Area Unique Identifier **CO-S05000-008 Lower Tabeguache/Campbell Creek**Acreage **11,060 acres**

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes  No 

## Description:

This unit is located between Uravan and the Tabeguache Area in western Montrose County. It includes Long Mesa and Burro Creek Mesa, as well as parts of Wild Cow and Spring Creek mesas. The mesas are drained by Spring Creek and Campbell Creek, which drain to the southwest into Tabeguache Creek in the southern part of the unit.

The unit is bounded on the northwest by Spring Creek Truck Trail (road), on the southwest by county road U 19, on the south by private land and roads above the southern rim of Tabeguache Creek, and on the east by county road Z 26 and private land.

One private inholding in Tabeguache Creek near the confluence with Campbell Creek and one private inholding on Burro Creek Mesa have been cherry-stemmed out of the unit. One water pipeline in the northern part of the unit in Spring Creek and one stock pond near the southern part of Spring Creek have also been cherry-stemmed out of the unit.

There are a few old, constructed vehicle routes in the unit, but they are not being maintained, and have for the most part become impassable to full-size vehicles, and do not meet the criteria for being wilderness inventory roads.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A 

## Description:

This unit is entirely on BLM lands. There are two 160 acre inholdings that are cherry-stemmed out of the unit. Both have small structures, roads and developments that are visible from parts of the unit that are close-by.

There is an old, non-functioning landing strip that crosses Spring Creek Truck Trail into the unit. It is only apparent when in its immediate vicinity. Along Spring Creek Truck Trail within the unit near the landing strip are several excavations and mounds of dirt, presumably from Uranium exploration activity several decades ago. Between the southwest tip of Long Mesa and Tabeguache Creek there is a network of old mining routes that are currently used by ATVs. These routes are obvious from the end of Long Mesa and parts of the south rim of Tabeguache Creek.

There are two old constructed routes entering the unit from the eastern boundary. One runs down Long Mesa and the other runs down Wild Cow Mesa. Both terminate at the edges of the mesas, above Tabeguache Creek. Neither is being maintained, and both have become primarily ATV routes.

There are a few check dams/stock ponds at various levels of functionality in the shallow basin to the east of the private inholding on Burro Creek Mesa. They are likely maintained with vehicle access. Minimum maintenance of routes would likely be allowed for maintenance purposes.

The mesa tops are largely open grasslands and sagebrush/winterfat shrublands. The slopes on the sides of the mesas and along the canyons that drain the mesas are rocky/ledgy and dominated by piñon-juniper forest. Canyon bottoms support piñon-juniper in some of the drier reaches, but generally support riparian vegetation (willow, cottonwood and oak). Tabeguache Creek supports cottonwood galleries.

Most of the current human use of the area appears to consist of activities related to livestock grazing. A few stock ponds and spring developments are scattered across the unit, but they are not dominant features, and are small in size. There is evidence of decades-old mining activity along Spring Creek Truck Trail and below the southwest tip of Long Mesa. These isolated areas lack naturalness. Otherwise, the unit appears to be natural in appearance and influenced very little by the activities of humans.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes  No  N/A

Description: The area appears to have very low visitation. Aside livestock grazing operations, there is little sign of people getting off of boundary roads and into the unit. Except when close to one of the private inholdings, a visitor would experience outstanding opportunities for solitude (freedom from the sights and sounds of other people) throughout most of this unit.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes  No  N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation): Aside from the boundary roads and a few unmaintained ATV routes the access to this unit is only by non-motorized and non-mechanized means. There are no recreation developments, and no special restrictions on recreation.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No   X  

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

**Summary of Analysis\***

\*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

**Area Unique Identifier: CO-05000-008 Lower Tabeguache/Campbell Creek****Summary**

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes \_\_\_ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The acreage of lands with wilderness characteristics within the unit is 11,060.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

Edd Franz, Outdoor Recreation Planner, 5/15/2014

Kira Christensen, Associate Field Office Manager (acting), 5/15/2014

Angela LoSasso, Rangeland Management Specialist, 5/15/2014

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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