

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Dates of Submissions: *December 30, 2003*

Date(s) of Field Office Review: *December, 2006- February, 2007*

Submitter: *SUWA*

Name of Area to be Reviewed: *Fisher Towers*

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: *Moab*

EVALUATION

1.) Was new information submitted by a member of the public for this area?

YES _____. NO X_____.

2.) If new information was submitted, describe the submission. For example, did the submission include a map that identifies the specific boundaries of the area(s) in question; a narrative that describes the wilderness characteristics of the area and documents how that information differs from the information gathered and reviewed in prior BLM inventories; photographic documentation; etc?

The area reviewed was derived from a GIS Data Layer provided by the proponent. New information such as maps, photographs, or narratives were not included.

3. As a result of interdisciplinary review of relevant information (which may include aerial photographs, state and county road information, road maintenance agreements, documentation from prior BLM inventories, field observations, maps, master title plats, evidence presented as new information by a proponent, etc.), do you conclude:

_____ a) the decision reached in previous BLM inventories that the area lacks wilderness characteristics is still valid.

(or)

X b) some or all of the area has wilderness characteristics as shown on the attached map.

4. Describe your findings regarding specific wilderness characteristics and provide detailed rationale.

See attached narrative

5. Document all information considered during the interdisciplinary team review (e.g. aerial photographs, state and county road information, road maintenance agreements, documentation from prior BLM inventories, field observations, maps, master title plats, evidence presented as new information by a proponent, etc.)

During the course of the interdisciplinary team review, Moab BLM undertook the following steps:

In late 2006 and early 2007, BLM used GIS information to identify potential impacts on naturalness including county road data (previously verified as part of travel plan formulation), and local BLM GIS data on range improvements, oil and gas wells, vegetative manipulations (especially chainings), and community pits. Master Title Plat data available from the State Office GIS was examined for rights-of-way.

BLM Moab next undertook a detailed review of high resolution aerial photos from 2006 to both verify information from the GIS review, as well as to look for additional impacts not incorporated in GIS. These impacts could include such things as seismic exploration lines not included in the county road inventory and other disturbances from past minerals activities.

The above steps enabled Moab BLM to prepare an updated map showing what remaining areas were likely to possess naturalness. As described in the attached narrative, some lands were cut off from the larger WIA by roads, other impacts or state lands, and lacked sufficient size as stand-alone units to possess wilderness characteristics. Other areas appeared generally natural in appearance, but possessed wilderness characteristics only in association with the larger Fisher Towers WIA.

Moab BLM convened an interdisciplinary review team meeting on January 11, 2007, to review the findings from the above steps. Team members were asked to provide information based on both field and resource knowledge, which either supported or refuted these findings. Based on input from this review, Moab BLM incorporated any necessary changes into its analysis.

The following specific documents and files were utilized:

1. *Grand County road inventory (GIS)*
2. *Grand County intrusion data (GIS)*
3. *Fisher Valley, Taylor range allotment files*
4. *NAIP 2006 aerial photos (GIS)*
5. *Vegetative treatments (local GIS)*
6. *Range improvements (local GIS)*
7. *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory file (Fisher Towers)*
8. *2003 Wilderness Inventory revision document*
9. *UWC Proposed Wilderness GIS Data Layer (2005)*

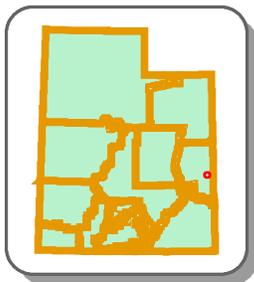
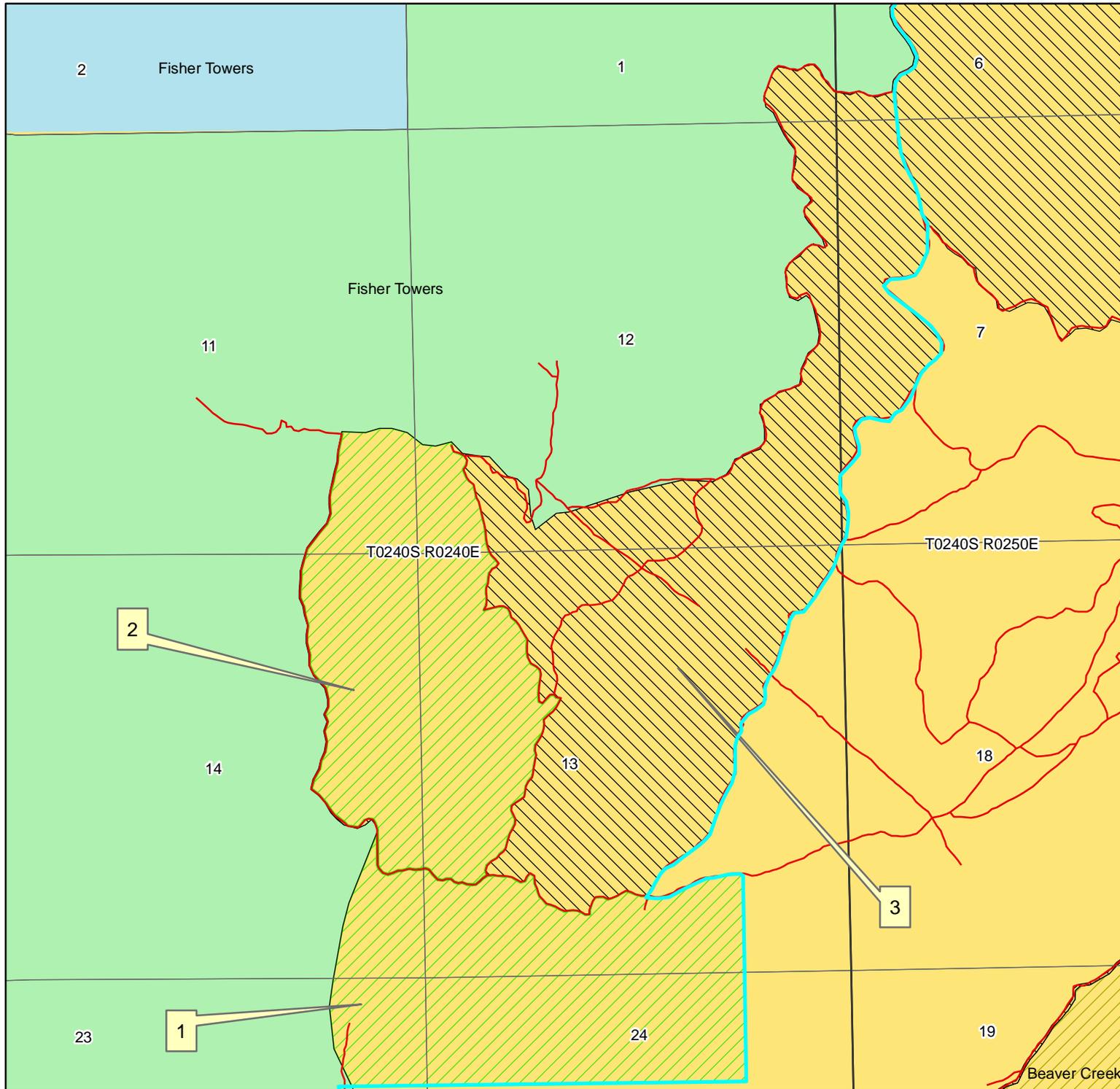
6. List the members of the interdisciplinary team and resource specialties represented.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Resource(s) Represented</i>
<i>Bill Stevens</i>	<i>Wilderness, GIS, Recreation</i>
<i>Ann Marie Aubry</i>	<i>Hydrology, Soils</i>
<i>Brent Northrup</i>	<i>Minerals, RMP Team Lead</i>
<i>Chad Niehaus</i>	<i>Rrecreation</i>
<i>Daryl Trotter</i>	<i>Botany, NEPA coordinator</i>
<i>Donna Turnipseed</i>	<i>Cultural, Paleontology</i>
<i>Katie Stevens</i>	<i>Recreation, Planning</i>
<i>Lynn Jackson</i>	<i>Geology, Minerals, Associate FO Manager</i>
<i>Pam Riddle</i>	<i>Wildlife</i>
<i>David Williams</i>	<i>Range</i>
<i>Maggie Wyatt</i>	<i>Field Office Manager</i>

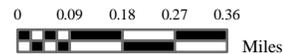
Field Office Manager /s/ Maggie Wyatt

Date 3/9/07

This determination is part of an interim step in BLM's internal decision-making process and does not constitute a decision that can be appealed.



1:20,817



Legend

Grand Co Identified Routes

1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory

- WC
- WC isolated by State
- NWC

Wilderness Characteristics Review

- NWC
- WC



Land Status

- Bureau of Land Management
- BLM Wilderness Area
- National Forest
- National Park Service
- Indian Lands
- Military Reservations
- State Lands
- Private Lands
- Water

CAUTION:
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have plotting errors due to source data.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.



Analysis of Citizens' Proposals for Wilderness Characteristics

Fisher Towers

The Citizens' Proposal to be reviewed for this area includes acreage contiguous to the Fisher Towers Wilderness Inventory Area (WIA).

To possess wilderness characteristics, lands must possess the appearance of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. According to the 1964 Wilderness Act, these outstanding opportunities generally require a land mass of 5000 acres or more. An exception to this are those lands which adjoin other lands already judged to possess wilderness characteristics, as the opportunities need be present *somewhere* in the larger unit. In the case of Fisher Towers, no unit would be large enough to potentially qualify as a stand-alone unit; it could possess outstanding opportunities only by association with contiguous lands that were evaluated in the *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory* and determined to have wilderness characteristics.

The new acreage can be divided into three units (see accompanying map). Units 1 and 2 are natural in character and adjoin the WIA lands found to possess wilderness characteristics. Therefore Units 1 and 2 have wilderness characteristics in association with the contiguous WIA lands. Unit 3 is cut off from the Fisher Towers WIA by substantially noticeable routes, and is not large enough to meet the size requirement for stand-alone units.

The following is a list by unit of acres of lands with wilderness characteristics:

Unit 1: 287 acres

Unit 2: 280 acres

Unit 3: 0 acres

Total: 567 acres