

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Dates of Submissions: *October 24, 2002; December 30, 2003*

Date(s) of Field Office Review: *October, 2002; December, 2006- February, 2007*

Submitter: *SUWA*

Name of Area to be Reviewed: *Mexico Point*

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: *Moab, Vernal*

EVALUATION

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

YES X . NO .

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?

Moab BLM first received new information from SUWA on October 24, 2002, which included maps, photos and a narrative. On December 30, 2003, BLM received a letter with the name of the proposed unit, and reference to America's Redrock Wilderness Act, proposed in Congress; no additional information was presented. A GIS-based map of the proposed unit was submitted by SUWA to Utah BLM SO, and provides the basis for the area reviewed. The northern portion of the unit is within the Vernal FO planning area, and is not reviewed here.

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.

The Mexico Point unit is generally natural in appearance. Unit 1 is bisected by a substantially noticeable route and is no longer natural in appearance. Units 2-4 are cut off from the larger unit by either substantially noticeable routes, State lands or other impacts. They are not large enough to meet the size criterion for wilderness characteristics. The unit is bounded by a combination of major county roads, an active pipeline and lands administered by the Vernal Field Office. No other impacts on naturalness have been identified either through office multidisciplinary review or review of aerial photos (2006). The unit is bounded by an active pipeline and roads. Considering the overall size of the unit, and the dissected terrain and vegetative cover, the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

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.)

To evaluate SUWA's October, 2002 new information, BLM staff from the Moab Field Office undertook an in-office review of available information on the proposed wilderness unit. This review consisted of the following:

- 1. Review of aerial photographs taken in August and September, 2001.*
 - 2. Review of GIS information including Grand County road inventory and oil and gas well sites and developments.*
 - 3. Consultation with Field Office resource specialists.*
 - 4. Review of plat books for the affected areas in order to identify rights-of-way.*
- The above review resulted in a finding (signed October 31, 2002) that at least 5,000 acres of SUWA's proposal was likely to possess wilderness characteristics.*

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), county intrusion data, 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. 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 which either supported or refuted these findings, based on both specialized resource expertise and field experience. Based on input from this review, Moab BLM incorporated any necessary changes into its analysis, and concluded that **12,837 acres** in this unit were likely to possess wilderness characteristics.

The following specific documents and files were utilized:

1. Grand County road inventory (GIS)
2. Grand County intrusion data (GIS)
3. Middle Canyon, Corral Wash range allotment files
4. NAIP 2006 aerial photos (GIS)
5. Vegetative treatments (local GIS)
6. Range improvements (local GIS)
7. Mexico Point inventory file
8. Mexico Point RPD

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

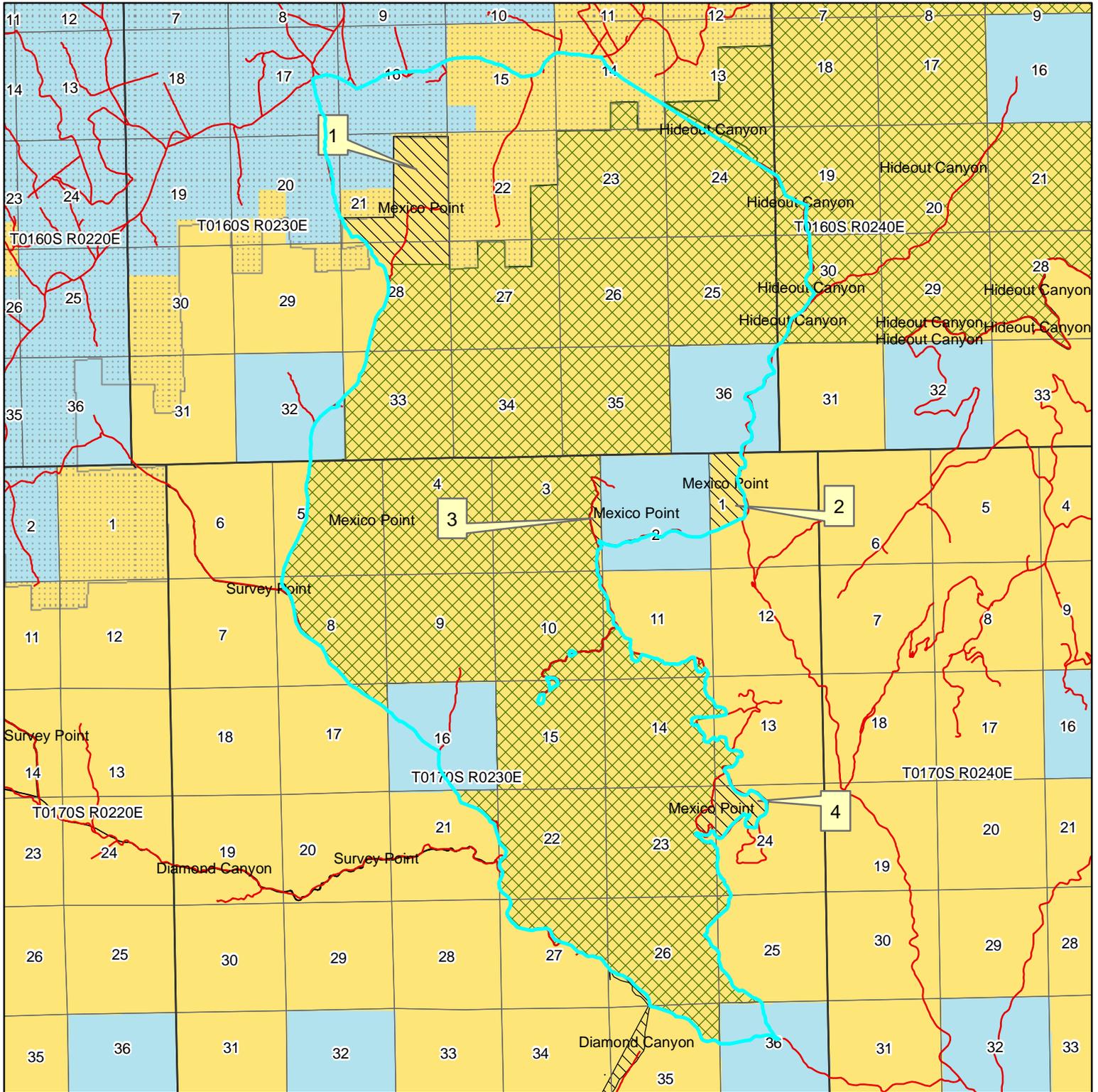
<i>Name</i>	<i>Resource(s) Represented</i>
<i>Bill Stevens</i>	<i>Wilderness, GIS, Recreation</i>
<i>Ann Marie Aubry</i>	<i>Hydrology, Soils</i>
<i>Brent Northrup</i>	<i>Minerals, RMP Team Lead</i>
<i>Chad Niehaus</i>	<i>Recreation</i>
<i>Daryl Trotter</i>	<i>Botany, NEPA coordinator</i>
<i>Donna Turnipseed</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 4/6/07

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.

Mexico Point WCR Review



1:79,120

Legend

- Grand Co Identified Routes
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- State
- Wilderness Characteristics Review
- US Forest Service (USFS)
- Indian Reservation (IR)
- Private
- Administered by Vernal FO
- NWC
- WC
- Area under review

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Moab Field Office
Map created on Feb 22, 2007



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.