

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Date of Submission: N/A

Date(s) of Field Office Review: 02/06/2007

Submitter: N/A

Name of Area to be Reviewed: The Needle (A – B)

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: Monticello

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 Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC). Additional materials 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:

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

(or)

_____ 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.

Size:

The Needle areas (A–B) proposed by the UWC for wilderness considerations are approximately 10,740 acres, collectively. The area was broken into two separate, stand alone units by two parcels of state land and surface intrusions. Unit A (northern area) is approximately 3,717 acres, and thus does not meet the size requirement for wilderness management. Unit B (southern area) is approximately 7,023 acres, and thus does meet the size requirement for wilderness management. The Needle area was inventoried during the initial inventory in 1979 and was not carried forward into the intensive inventory because the area was determined not to be natural in character. Because the area was inventoried and no documentation has been received in addition to the GIS data layer, this is not considered to be new information.

Appearance of Naturalness:

The ID team reviewed the area using GIS data layers, which included recent aerial photography (August 2006), San Juan County Road Data, og-wells GIS Layer, range allotment files, and Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Data.

The ID Team undertook a detailed review of Unit B, via 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. ID Team members have visited these areas over several years while administering their respective resources, and have noted that there are substantially noticeable human impacts, such as multiple areas of past mining activities (including drill roads) throughout the unit, water tanks, and a permanent cow camp. The extent of these impacts is such that excluding the impacted areas from the area with no impacts would reduce the size of the natural area to well below 5,000 acres. Therefore, the area is determined to not possess natural character.

Because Unit A was found to not be of sufficient size, and because Unit B was found to not possess Natural Character, further analysis for Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation was not required.

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.)

Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC) GIS Data Layer Proposal (2005)

White Canyon Allotment File

Master Title Plats

Law Enforcement Patrol Logs: Southwest Canyons Sector

GIS Aerial Photography (NAIP 2006: San Juan County north and south)

GIS Oil and Gas Data (og-wells)

Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario for Oil and Gas (2005)

Mineral Potential Report (2005)

BLM Utah Final Initial Wilderness Inventory (1979)

San Juan Resource Area Management Plan (1991)

Analysis of the Management Situation (2005)

Attachments:

- *Map of The Needle Units (A-B)*

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

NAME	RESOURCE (S) REPRESENTED
Gary Torres	Planner, NEPA Coordinator
Brad Colin	Recreation, OHV, Wilderness
Jed Carling	Range
Maxine Deeter	Lands, VRM
Marie Tuxhorn	Law Enforcement
Doug Paul	Fire, Fuels
Nick Sandberg	Range, Assistant Field Manager
Sandra Meyers	Field Manager
Brian Quigley	Recreation
Tammy Wallace	Wildlife
Nancy Shearin	Cultural, Paleontology
Jeff Brown	Oil and Gas, Hazardous Materials
Ted McDougall	Minerals
Paul Curtis	Range, Riparian, Soils, Vegetation
Dave Mermejo	BLM Utah State Office
Paul Leatherbury	GIS

Field Office Manager _____

Date _____.

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.