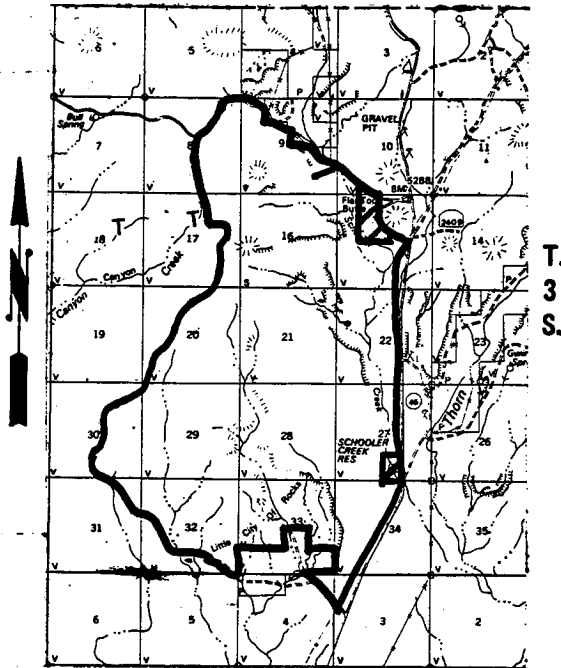




SHOSHONE DISTRICT
UNITS IDENTIFIED AS
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

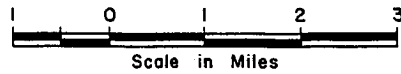
**54-5
LITTLE CITY OF ROCKS**

R. 15 E.



LEGEND

-  **WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**
-  **AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS**



54-5 LITTLE CITY OF ROCKS

The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 5,970 acres of BLM land with a 640 acre State land inholding. This acreage differs from the 5,665 acres shown in the August, 1979, report due to a more accurate calculation of acreage. The unit is located 13 miles north of Gooding on the south facing side of the Bennett Hills. It lies just west of Highway 46. The major portion of the unit is a gently sloping plain with several rhyolite bluffs. The south-central portion of the unit contains an aggregation of wind and water eroded rhyolite columns which are collectively known as the Little City of Rocks. Dominant vegetation throughout the unit is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. Chokecherry and willows are found in some of the more shaded portions of the canyons in the Little City of Rocks. There is one small grove of aspen on a north facing slope in the north end of the unit.

NATURALNESS:

Two access routes, which are not substantial imprints on naturalness, extend a short distance into the unit from the south and east boundaries. A total of 95 acres either impacted by a mechanical disturbance or reserved as material sites should be deleted from the unit.

SOLITUDE:

The rhyolite rock formations in the southern portion of the unit provide excellent topographic screening. The canyon bottoms also have some vegetative screening from several shrub species. The combination of topographic and vegetative screening in the unit provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The northern portions also contain good topographic screening, and provide the opportunity to enjoy solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The unit provides primitive recreation opportunities which are considered outstanding. The many rhyolite rock columns provide an ideal setting in which to participate in photography, nature study, and hiking and camping. Opportunities for other activities that are present, but may not be outstanding include hunting, horseback riding, and cross country skiing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains several archaeological sites; golden eagle, prairie falcon, great horned owl, and red-tailed hawk nesting sites; and unique geological formations of wind and water eroded rhyolite.

REHABILITATION:

Two access routes have some potential for returning to a natural condition if vehicle access were restricted. With the passage of time, vegetation would grow in the routes and make them difficult to distinguish from the surrounding area.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments opposed to identifying the unit as a study area specifically mentioned the following reasons:

- The area is covered with roads; is not natural because of several imprints of man.
- There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude because works of man outside the unit are visible from inside the unit.
- There are no outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation because the area is too crowded; or the unit is hot, dry, and uncomfortable with many rattlesnakes.
- The unit is too small.

Comments supporting a study area specifically mentioned the following reasons:

- There are no roads in the unit which can be considered substantial imprints.
- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude.
- Many noted that they had experienced outstanding primitive recreation within the unit.
- Several supplemental values were noted.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Size:

The unit contains 5,875 acres of public land. Since the unit exceeds the 5,000-acre requirement, the comment that the unit is too small is not valid.

Roadless/Naturalness:

No supporting information was submitted by those claiming that roads or substantial imprints of man were located within the unit. No new roads or imprints of man were found during additional field checks.

The reference in the proposed decision to rehabilitation was to portions of the unit that meet the naturalness criteria, not to those portions that do not.

Solitude:

Imprints of man outside the unit may be considered during the inventory only in situations where the imprint is adjacent to the unit and its impact so extremely imposing that it cannot be ignored. Imprints of man outside the unit, such as roads, highways, and agricultural activity are not necessarily significant enough to cause their consideration in the inventory of the unit. Highway 46 is well screened from the majority of the unit. Distant vistas of Gooding, Bliss, or other settlements are too far from the unit to be considered in evaluating solitude.

Primitive Recreation:

Present visitor use in the unit is not relevant to evaluating this criterion. The factor to be determined is whether an outstanding opportunity is present regardless of present amount of use. A hot and dry desert environment, replete with rattlesnakes, does not preclude the opportunity to have an outstanding recreation experience if one is prepared to deal with it, in fact, it adds to the physical challenge of the experience. The exceptional scenic beauty of the Little City of Rocks formation and the diversity of landforms within the unit, affords outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 5,875 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 20,960 acres of BLM land with 640 acres of State land inholdings. This figure differs from the 20,480 acres shown in the August, 1979, report due to a more accurate calculation of acreage.

The unit lies on the south-facing side of the Mount Bennett Hills, ten miles north of Gooding. Most of the unit is a flat prairie which rises gently to the north. In the central portion of the unit Black Canyon and East Black Canyon come to within one-third of a mile of each other leaving a narrow strip of the prairie table top between them. The northern half of the unit has a topography composed of rolling hills broken by large and small canyons. The west edge of the unit has unusual rock formations of weathered rhyolite. Dominant vegetation throughout the unit is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. There are pockets of willow and other shrubs along some of the intermittent streams.

NATURALNESS:

Several access routes have caused a large parcel in the southern portion to be deleted from the unit. This parcel contains a concentration of imprints on naturalness which are substantially noticeable.

Two access routes from the north boundary extend into the portion of the unit which meets naturalness criteria. Both routes should be excluded from the unit, with the new boundary extending to the edge of the physical impact caused by the roads. An access route, which has been abandoned for several decades and which is not a substantially noticeable imprint on naturalness, extends the length of Black Canyon Creek.

SOLITUDE:

The more northern portions of the unit which are cut by Black Canyon and Burnt Willow Canyon and have rolling hills provide excellent topographic screening. The many rhyolite rock formations provide additional topographic screening. The southern end of the unit has a few small canyons which provide some screening between open expanses of sagebrush prairie. There is little vegetative screening within the unit. The high degree of topographic screening in the unit allows the visitor an outstanding opportunity to enjoy solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The unit contains opportunities for a wide variety of activities, including hiking, nature study, photography, and camping; all considered outstanding. Less outstanding opportunities include hunting, horseback riding, ski touring and snowshoeing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains several archaeological sites, golden eagle nesting sites, and sage grouse strutting grounds.

REHABILITATION:

An old mechanically constructed trail in Black Canyon is well on the way to returning to a natural condition. The trail is very narrow and overgrown with vegetation to the point it is almost impossible to recognize on the ground. All fences could be completely removed without leaving scars. With the passage of time a brush spray area will become even harder to distinguish.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments opposed to identifying a study area within the unit are summarized as follows:

- The unit is covered with roads.
- There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude in the canyons because they would tend to crowd and confine users.
- There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude in the unit because settlements can be observed from high points in the unit.
- There are no outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation in the unit.

Comments from those supporting the proposed decision are summarized as follows:

- Roads in the unit do not affect solitude or naturalness.
- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- The unit has outstanding opportunities for solitude, and for primitive recreation.
- Access routes within the unit will easily return to a natural condition.
- Supplemental values were noted.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

Field checks were made to locate roads which were noted in comments. No new roads were found. No new imprints of man were found in that portion of the unit proposed as a study area. The naturalness is not affected by vistas of settlements outside the boundaries of the unit.

The reference in the proposed decision to rehabilitation was to portions of the unit that meet the naturalness criteria, not to those portions that do not.

Solitude:

Opportunities for solitude are considered outstanding because of topographic screening from Black and Burnt Willow Canyons and numerous rock formations along the western side of the unit. There are more than 14 miles of meandering shallow canyons within the area which one can easily leave in several places to explore the plateaus. Because the unit offers a diversity of interesting landforms and easy entry or exit to the main shallow canyons, the canyons do not create a significant corridor effect. Any corridor effect in the canyon is minimized by the number of miles of canyon available for use.

Primitive Recreation:

Primitive recreation opportunities are considered outstanding because of the unit's unusual natural features and recreation attractions found in a diversity of geological formations.

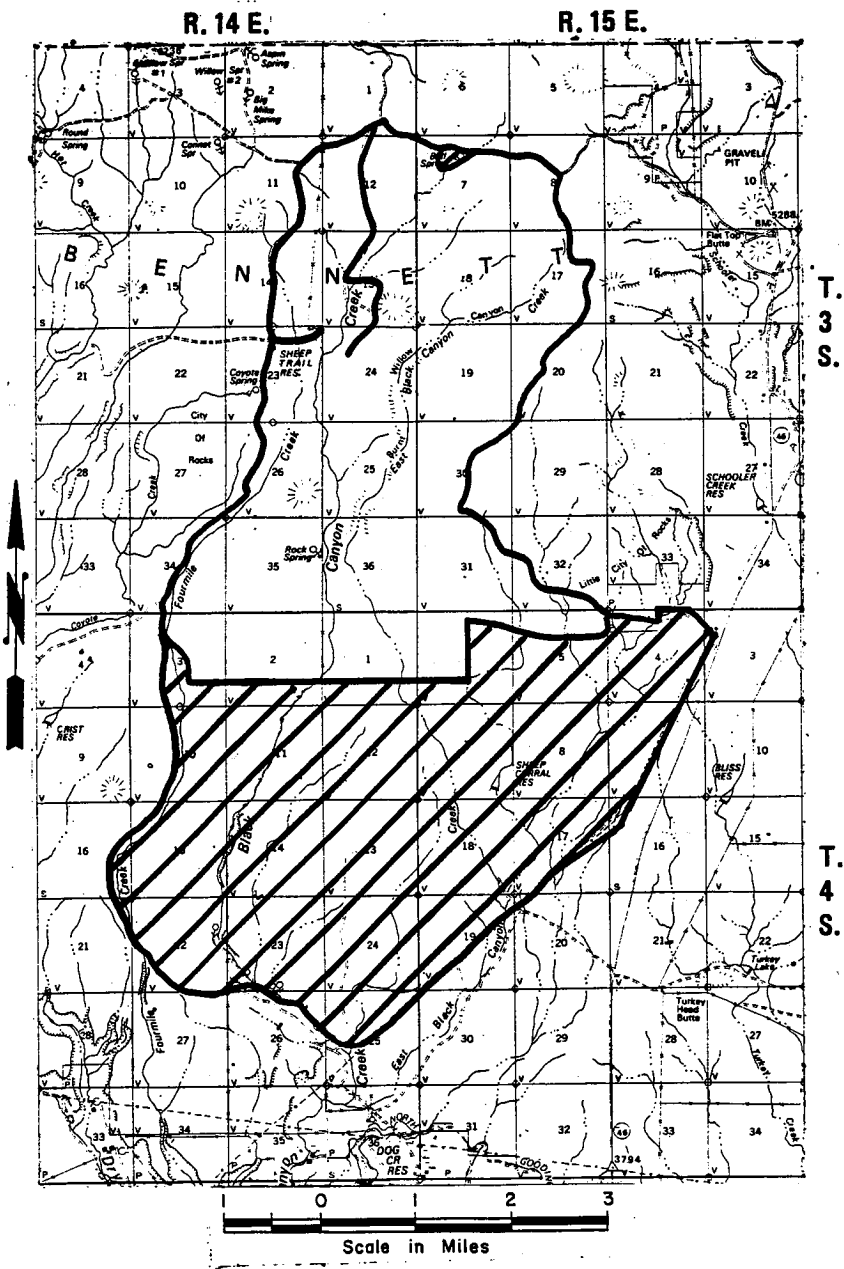
A hot and dry desert environment, replete with rattlesnakes, does not preclude the opportunity to have an outstanding recreation experience if one is prepared to deal with it, in fact, it adds to the physical challenge of the experience.

* * *



DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 10,371 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

54-6
BLACK CANYON



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 23,470 acres of BLM land with 1,280 acres of State land inholdings. This figure differs from the 22,685 acres shown in the August, 1979, report due to a more accurate calculation of acreage.

The unit lies on the south facing side of the Mount Bennett Hills, 14 miles northwest of Gooding. The southeastern portion of the unit is composed of a series of deeply carved rhyolite canyons. Throughout these canyons there are many large columns of rhyolite which rise over 100 feet into the air. These canyons, and their rhyolite rock formations, are collectively known as the City of Rocks. Dry Creek Canyon, on the western side of the City of Rocks, has a perennial stream flowing within it. The far west side of the unit is mostly a gently sloping prairie, cut by the East Fork of Clover Creek and Catchall Creek. There are several basalt bluffs which overlook this portion of the unit. The northern end of the unit is a rolling prairie dissected by several intermittent stream drainages. There are several basalt bluffs dominating some portions of this prairie landscape. Dominant vegetation throughout the unit is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. The shaded portions of the canyons support a more luxuriant vegetation consisting of willow, aspen, cottonwood, serviceberry, and chokecherry.

NATURALNESS:

Several access routes, which meet the road definition, have caused parcels to be excluded from the unit. A parcel in the northeast corner has been dropped because it contains several roads and ways, as well as other substantial imprints of man. The boundary has been moved to exclude two sections of State land which are intersected by roads. Three roads have had a cherry stem boundary adjustment made to exclude them from the unit. Three other access routes, which are not substantial imprints on naturalness, extend into or through that part of the unit which meets naturalness criteria.

There are three chalk mines along the southwest boundary of the unit, one small mechanically constructed reservoir, three spring developments, a mechanically constructed canal, an old brush spraying and several fences within the unit. The majority of these imprints of man are within the portion deleted due to access roads.

SOLITUDE:

The numerous canyons and rhyolite rock formations in the southern portion of the unit provide excellent topographic screening. In addition, some portions of the canyon bottoms support a riparian vegetation which provides good vegetative screening. This combination of topographic and vegetative screening create an outstanding opportunity for solitude within the unit. The more northern portions of the unit have many rolling hills and buttes which also provide a good opportunity for solitude even though it may not be as outstanding as the southern portions.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Primitive recreation opportunities within the unit are outstanding. Recreation is centered around the rock outcrops and canyons in the City of Rocks. Photography, hiking, camping, wildlife observation, and nature study are all considered outstanding. Many other activities including horseback riding, fishing, and hunting are also possible within the unit.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains outstanding examples of the geological processes of wind and fluvial erosion on rhyolite rock; one known archaeological site; nesting sites of the golden eagle, prairie falcon, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, and short-eared owl; sage grouse strutting grounds; and outstanding scenic vistas of weathered rhyolite rock formations and deeply carved canyons.

REHABILITATION:

Four access routes have some potential for returning to a natural condition if vehicle access were restricted. With the passage of time, vegetation will grow in the routes and make them difficult to distinguish from the surrounding area. The three spring developments in the unit could all be rehabilitated to blend more with the surrounding landscape. The spring facilities could also be completely removed. All fences could be completely removed without leaving scars.

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments opposed to identifying a study area within the unit are summarized as follows:

- Roads exist within the unit which were not identified in the proposed decision.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist because the northern portion of the unit lacks screening, or because settlements outside the unit are visible from high points within the unit.
- Outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation do not exist because of adverse climatic conditions and rattlesnakes in unit, or because of overuse by recreationists at present.
- The unit does not meet the naturalness criteria because of the presence of fences, sheep camps, and waterholes.

Comments that supported identifying a study area are summarized as follows:

- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- The unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, and for primitive recreation.
- Various supplemental values are present in the unit.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

An access route (identified in the proposed decision) has been field checked in reference to the comments received which indicate that it should be identified as a road. The route is 1 1/4 miles in length. Comments indicated that this route receives regular use. Assuming that some maintenance is performed regularly when the route is used, the route should be identified as a road. This road would then form a new boundary for the unit, creating another unit on the west side of the road.

No other new roads or ways were identified. No new imprints of man were identified.

The reference in the proposed decision to rehabilitation was to portions of the unit that meet the naturalness criteria, not to those portions that do not.

Solitude:

Portions of the unit offer outstanding opportunities for solitude because the extensive canyon system and numerous rock formations offer topographic screening. Imprints of man outside the unit may be considered during the inventory only in situations where the imprint is adjacent to the unit and its impact so extremely imposing that it cannot be ignored. Distant vistas of Gooding, Bliss, or other settlements do not fit this criteria.

Many areas within the unit offer outstanding opportunities for solitude where settlements, fences, or other developments are not visible.

Primitive Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation are considered to be present within the unit because of the presence of exceptional natural features and because of challenging terrain and physical conditions. Adverse climate and rattlesnakes may enhance elements of challenge and risk for the various primitive recreation opportunities.

* * *

DECISION:

Due to public comments and field evaluations, the road as discussed earlier, splits the unit into two parcels. Unit a (east portion), 14,743 acres; and unit b (west portion), 6,287 acres are identified as separate wilderness study areas as they both meet the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.