

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

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 8,881 acres of BLM land with a 640 acre State land inholding. The unit lies southwest of the summit of Davis Mountain, one of the highest points in the Bennett Hills. It is 18 miles north of Bliss. The topography is dominated by a series of steep hills with several intermittent and perennial streams cutting between them. Rhyolite and basalt outcrops dominate the tops of many of the hills. Dominant vegetation throughout most of the unit is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. The higher portions of the unit have several scattered stands of aspen and clumps of tobacco brush. Indian paintbrush and lupine are also found at the higher elevations.

NATURALNESS:

Three access routes, associated with reservoir developments on the east side of the unit, have caused a parcel of land to be deleted from the unit. An access route in the southern part of the unit has caused deletion of another parcel. Three short access routes, which are not substantial imprints on naturalness, extend into the unit from the northern boundary road. All of the substantially noticeable imprints on naturalness have been deleted from the unit with boundary changes. The remaining lands within the unit appear to be affected primarily by the forces of nature.

SOLITUDE:

The unit is broken by many steep hills and gulleys which provide excellent topographic screening. The higher portion of the unit supports dense stands of aspen and undergrowth of tobacco brush which give a high degree of vegetative screening. Additional vegetative screening is provided by willows along portions of stream drainages. The combination of topographic and vegetative screening provides the visitor an outstanding opportunity to enjoy solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The steep, rolling hills and numerous vistas within the unit contribute to make hiking, nature study, and photography opportunities outstanding. The scattered aspen groves provide variety in the landscape as well as shade. Less outstanding recreation opportunities include horseback riding and hunting.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains outstanding scenic vistas, and red-tailed hawk and great horned owl nesting sites.

REHABILITATION:

Five 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 areas. All fences could be completely removed without leaving scars. All impacts within the unit could be returned to a natural condition with the passage of time and a very minimal amount of hand labor.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

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

- Roads exist in the unit which were not found in the inventory.
- Fences and other developments cause the unit not to meet the naturalness criteria.
- Since it is possible to see vistas of settlements from inside the unit, the unit does not meet the naturalness criteria.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in the unit because settlements can be seen from high points inside the unit.
- Outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation do not exist because the unit is too close to deeded land, or because of harsh climatic conditions and the presence of rattlesnakes.

Comments that supported the proposed decision to identify a study area in the unit are summarized as follows:

- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation exist within the unit.
- Access routes identified in the proposed decision as not meeting road criteria will easily return to a natural condition.
- Various supplemental values were listed.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

No new roads or access routes have been located within the unit. Existing access routes were reevaluated and do not meet road criteria or represent a substantially noticeable imprint of man. No new fences were located in 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:

The unit's more than 12 miles of canyons, numerous aspen groves, and topographic screening provide outstanding opportunities for 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. Distant vistas of settlements do not fit this criteria.

Primitive Recreation:

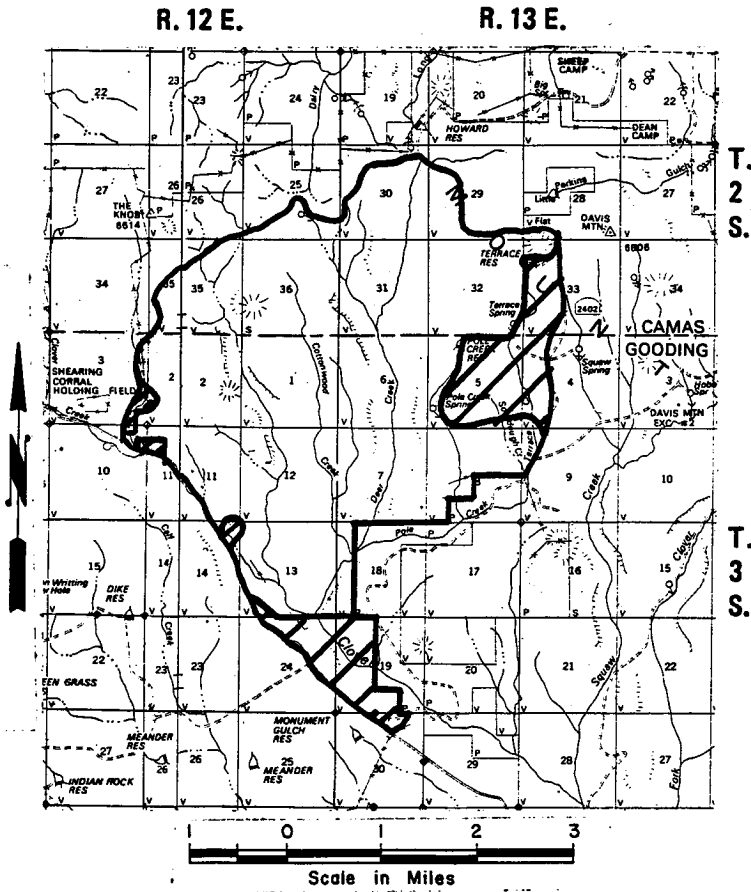
Present visitor use in a unit is not relevant to evaluating this criterion. The factor to be determined is whether an outstanding opportunity is present, regardless of present amount of use. Harsh climatic conditions and the presence of rattlesnakes may increase the elements of challenge and risk and enhance primitive recreation values. Outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation have been determined to exist in the unit because it provides exceptional scenery, diversity of landform, and mobility of travel in and out of more than 12 miles of canyons.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 7,487 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

54-10
DEER CREEK



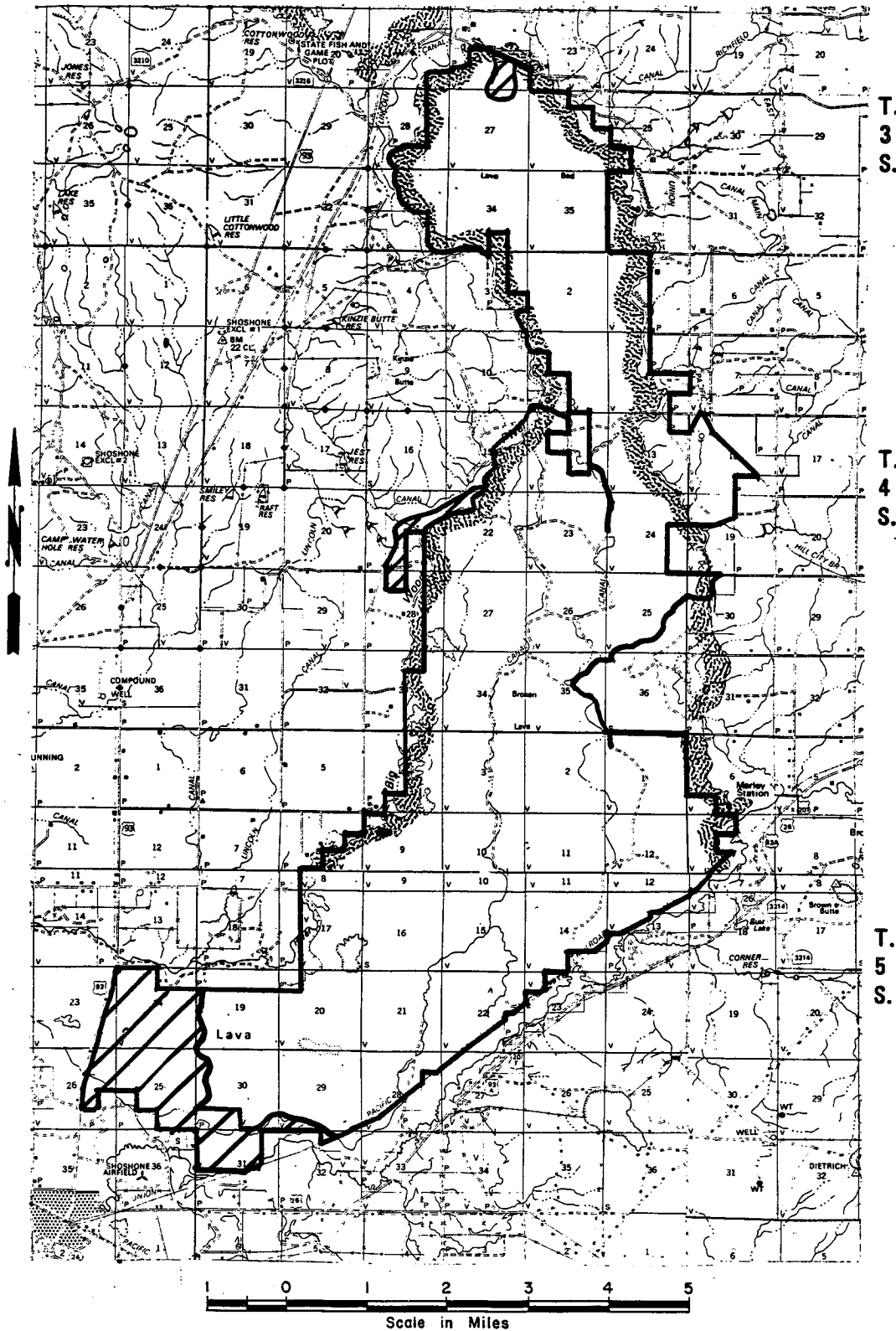
LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

56-2
LAVA

R. 17 E.

R. 18 E.



LEGEND



WILDERNESS STUDY AREA



AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

56-2 LAVA

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

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 25,593 acres of BLM land. The August, 1979, report indicated that Unit 56-2 contained 9,400 acres of BLM land. Due to a more accurate calculation of acreage this figure should be 9,640 acres. Because of an erroneous identification of boundary roads during the initial inventory, Unit 56-3, containing 5,275 acres is now added as a part of Unit 56-2. Access routes identified previously as boundary roads of Units 56-2 and 56-3 were found during the Intensive Inventory to not meet the road definition, causing the addition of 10,678 acres to Unit 56-2, which now contains the total of 25,593 acres. The unit lies on a flat lava plain just northeast of Shoshone. The major portion of the unit is covered with a lava flow which contains many examples of pressure ridges and ropey lava. Dominant vegetation throughout the unit is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. There are some ferns in shaded portions of lava fissures and many different colors of lichen on the exposed surfaces of the lava.

NATURALNESS:

An access route in the southern part of the unit meets the road definition and splits a small parcel from the remainder of the unit. Another road extends into the unit from the west side. The boundary has been cherry stemmed around this road to exclude it from the unit. Four other access routes, which are not substantial imprints on naturalness, extend into or through the unit from the south and east boundaries.

SOLITUDE:

The unit has a rugged lava landscape which provides a feeling of remoteness and isolation. There is topographic screening provided by rugged pressure ridges, lava domes, and subsidence craters. Large sagebrush provides only minimal screening. The topographic relief due to lava formations provides the visitor an outstanding opportunity to enjoy solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The unit contains the opportunity for a wide variety of recreational experiences, including hiking, geological study, and photography; all considered outstanding. Less outstanding opportunities include horseback riding, cross country skiing and camping.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit offers an outstanding opportunity for scientific study of geologic processes of lava flows and associated formations.

REHABILITATION:

Six 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.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments that opposed the identification of the unit as a study area are summarized as follows:

- There are many unimproved roads in the unit.
- The main canal runs through the unit; roads must be maintained along the canal.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in the unit because vehicle traffic, houses, and agricultural developments can be seen and/or heard inside the unit.
- Outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation do not exist in the unit because it has a hot, dry climate with little variation in topography.

Comments that supported the proposed decision are summarized as follows:

- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- The unit clearly meets the criteria for outstanding solitude and primitive recreation opportunities.
- Various supplemental values exist within the unit.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

Vehicle routes shown within the study area were identified in the proposed decision as access routes which do not meet the road criteria and which are substantially unnoticeable. In most cases these routes are two-wheel tracks winding through the rugged lava terrain with sagebrush growing between the tracks. In some cases, these routes have been so infrequently travelled in recent years that they have been obliterated by vegetative growth over much of their length. These routes, even when clearly defined as two tracks, are so well screened by low vegetation that they cannot be seen except when standing on or very close to them.

Inquiries have been made to the Big Wood Canal Company as to the existence of canals within the study area. They have confirmed that no canals are located within the unit. None of the access routes within the unit are maintained by the canal company, or needed to maintain the canal system. Features marked on the BLM map as canals are actually dry river beds with no construction or other visible imprints of man on them.

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

Solitude:

Opportunities for solitude within the study area are considered outstanding because of the topographic screening provided by numerous rugged lava outcrops, and the large size of the unit.

Field checks have determined that traffic sights and sounds from Highway 93 and other roads outside the unit cannot be seen or heard from large areas within the unit. Sights and sounds outside the unit may be considered during the inventory only in situations where the imprint is adjacent to the unit and its impact is 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 a unit.

The agricultural developments adjacent to this unit do not have major impacts on the solitude of the unit. In many parts of the unit agricultural developments are not visible, and if visible from the central part of the unit are not clearly distinguishable as agricultural land.

Primitive Recreation:

Opportunities for primitive recreation are considered outstanding in the study area because it contains a large and exceptional geological feature, the recent Black Butte Lava Flow. Recreation opportunities are enhanced by the elements of challenge and risk which are encountered when travelling through the rugged landscape on foot.

Present visitor use 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, if one is prepared to deal with it, does not preclude the opportunity to have an outstanding recreation experience, in fact, it adds to the physical challenge of the experience.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 23,680 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

57-2 SHALE BUTTE

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

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 21,898 acres of BLM land, with a 640 acre State land inholding. This differs from the 21,661 acres shown in the August 1979 report, due to the addition of 237 acres where the boundary was incorrectly identified during the Initial Inventory.

The unit lies 15 miles southeast of Richfield. The unit is dominated by a large, relatively recent lava flow from the Shale Butte formation. Portions of the lava flow are extremely rugged with many pressure ridges, lava domes, and subsidence craters. Also in the unit are desert grasslands around the fringe of the lava flow.

NATURALNESS:

Several access routes, many the result of activities by National Guard tanks, create a concentration of substantially noticeable imprints on the naturalness of the unit. A large parcel of land has been deleted from the southern part of the unit to eliminate these routes. Another access route has caused a parcel of land on the west side of the unit to be deleted. Three access routes, which are not substantially noticeable imprints on naturalness extend a short distance into the unit. Two are located on the north boundary and one on the south boundary.

SOLITUDE:

Opportunities for solitude exist throughout most of the unit. Its remote location, the absence of man-made features, and the low probability of meeting others enhance opportunities for solitude. Outstanding opportunities for solitude have been judged to be present within the lava formation which occupies the central portion of the unit. The rugged, broken topography in the lavas provides excellent screening.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Primitive recreation opportunities within the unit are considered outstanding and generally focus on the volcanic features and associated biotic community. Activities include hiking, camping, photography, and nature study. The unit offers a challenge and risk with all recreation activities which enhances the primitive experience. The factors of challenge and risk are emphasized by the rugged terrain, lack of reliable water sources, extreme temperatures, and lack of natural shelter.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

A burrowing owl (sensitive species) has a nesting site in the unit. The lava flow offers excellent opportunities to study primary succession and the geology of volcanic formations.

REHABILITATION:

Two access routes have some possibility of returning to a more natural condition if vehicular use were restricted. With the passage of time, vegetation will grow in the routes making it difficult to distinguish the routes from the rest of the area.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments that supported the proposed decision to identify a study area are summarized as follows:

- Dropped acreage should be added back to the area proposed as a study area.
- The unit meets the naturalness criteria.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation exist in the unit.
- Various supplemental values were mentioned.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Naturalness:

Extensive imprints of man in the form of tank tracks and random vehicle tracks of other kinds have left a noticeable mark on the naturalness of the lands dropped from the southern part of the unit. An access route, which is a major imprint on naturalness, cuts a parcel of less than 5,000 acres from the west side of the unit. No information in the comments indicates that an error was made in deleting these parcels from the unit.

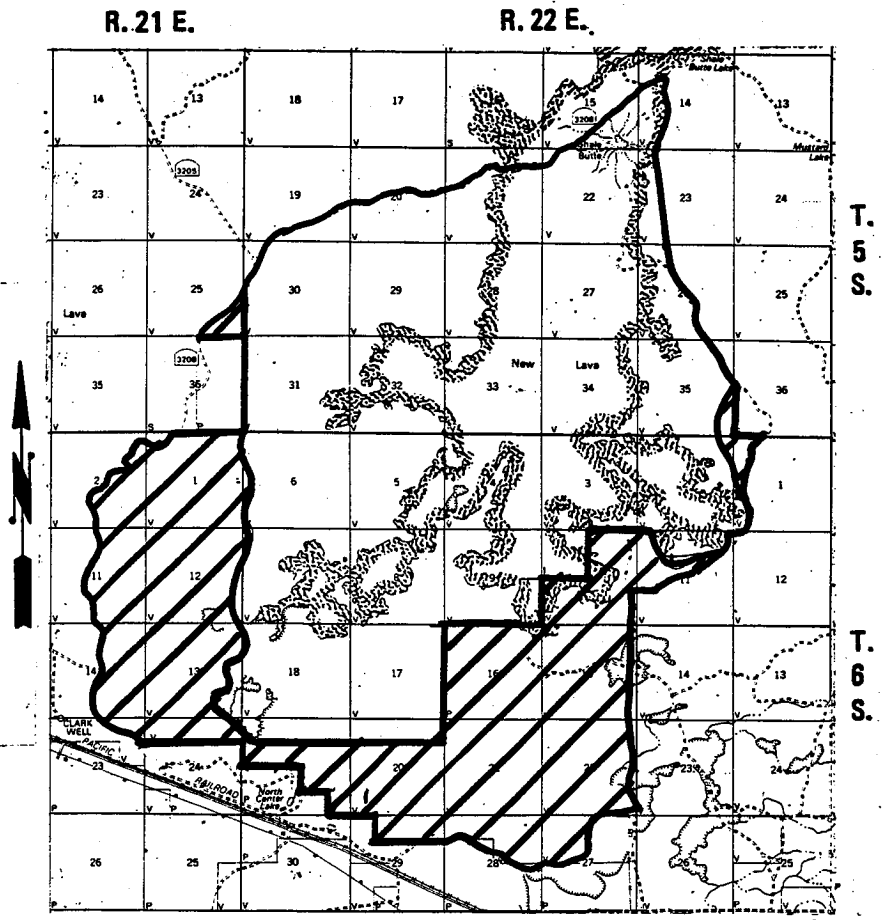
The reference in the proposed decision to rehabilitation was to portions of the unit that meet the naturalness criteria, not to those portions that do not.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 15,968 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

57-2
SHALE BUTTE



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

