

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Date of Submission: December 15, 2001

Proponent: Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA); Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC)

Name of Area to be Reviewed: **Goslin Mountain Area**

Date(s) of Field Office Review: February 7, 2007

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: Vernal Field Office

EVALUATION

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

a. 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 previously gathered and reviewed in the BLM inventories; photographic documentation; etc?

a. No new information has been submitted by a member of the public.

The Goslin Mountain review area is contained within the 1979 *Home Mountain Wilderness Inventory Situation Evaluation Report (UT-080-101)*. On February 14, 1979, it was recommended the area did not qualify for further wilderness inventory. The recommendation was approved on February 21, 1979.

The Goslin Mountain review area was not reinventoried for inclusion in the *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory (revised 2003)*.

The proponents submitted information for the *SUWA/UWC Goslin Mountain Proposed Wilderness Unit* to the BLM Vernal Field Office on December 15, 2001. Their submitted information included more detailed data than the BLM considered for the 1979 *Home Mountain Wilderness Inventory Situation Evaluation Report* concerning opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, supplemental wilderness values, natural character, and photos. The Goslin Mountain review area is encompassed in the SUWA/UWC submittal.

The BLM Vernal Field Office in November 2002 prepared an *Evaluation of New Information Report* that determined the conclusion reached in the 1979 inventory review was still valid that the area does not contain wilderness characteristics.

On February 7, 2007, a Vernal Field Office interdisciplinary team reviewed the 1979 *Home Mountain Wilderness Inventory Situation Evaluation Report (UT-080-101)*; the September 2001 SUWA/UWC submittal; and, the BLM Vernal Field Office *Evaluation of New Information Report* of November 2002.

In addition, the interdisciplinary team reviewed changes to the area since 2002 that could affect the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics.

This maintenance review did not include U.S. National Forest lands, State of Utah lands, or private lands. The attached map shows the BLM Vernal Field Office's determination of which lands contain or do not contain wilderness characteristics for the review area.

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

a. The decision previously reached in the BLM inventories that the area lacks wilderness 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.

a. **WIA Area.**

(1). **Description:** No WIA Area is present.

b. **Externally Nominated Area.**

(1). **Description:** The Goslin Mountain review area is located in Daggett County about 47 air miles north-northeast of Vernal, Utah. There are 6,084 acres in the review area separated into 4 parcels. Additional lands managed by the U. S. Ashley National Forest or owned by the State of Utah were nominated by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) and the Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC). The BLM Vernal Field Office interdisciplinary team did not review these lands for wilderness characteristics.

Parcel #1 is located in Sections 22 and 25-27, T3N, R22E; and, Sections 28-30 and 33, T3N, R23E. The parcel is adjacent to the Ashley National Forest which forms the southern boundary. Lands within this portion of the forest have been designated as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has indicated that these lands are Roadless only and are not being managed for wilderness characteristics. Other boundaries of the parcel are primarily formed by trails and a powerline. Most of the terrain in the review area is composed of the lower north-facing slopes of Dutch John Mountain and Goslin Mountain. A small portion of the parcel is in the Antelope Flat. The parcel is less than 5,000 acres in size.

Parcel #2 is located in Sections 33 and 34, T3N, R23E. The parcel is adjacent to the Ashley National Forest which forms the southern boundary. Lands within this portion of the forest have been designated as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has indicated that these lands are Roadless only and are not being managed for wilderness characteristics. Other boundaries of the parcel are primarily formed by trails. The small parcel is located on the rolling surface of the top of Goslin Mountain. The area is substantially less than 5,000 acres.

Parcel #3 is located in Section 35, T3N, R23E. The parcel is adjacent to the Ashley National Forest which forms the southern boundary. Lands within this portion of the forest have been designated as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has indicated that these lands are Roadless only and are not being managed for wilderness characteristics. Other boundaries of the parcel are primarily formed by trails and State of Utah owned lands. The small parcel is located on the rolling surface of the top of Goslin Mountain. The area is substantially less than 5,000 acres.

Parcel #4 is the largest of the four parcels. It is located in Sections 24-27, T3N, R23E; Sections 19, 20, 29-31, T3N, R24E; and Sections 4-6, 8, T2N, R24E. The rugged, steep slopes with numerous canyons and washes drop rapidly to Red Creek near the eastern edge of the parcel. The northeastern part of the area near Martin Draw is relatively flat and a part of Clay Basin. Red Creek enters a steep-walled canyon near Two Horse Butte. The canyon is referred to by the UWC as Red Creek Gorge.

The parcel is adjacent to the Ashley National Forest which forms much of the southwestern boundary. Lands within this portion of the forest have been designated as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has indicated that these lands are Roadless only and are not being managed for wilderness characteristics. Other boundaries of the parcel are primarily formed by trails and State of Utah owned lands. The area is less than 5,000 acres.

The Goslin Mountain area provides year-round habitat for mule deer, antelope, and Rocky Mountain elk, cougar, and strutting areas and habitat for sage grouse.

About 694 acres or 11% of the area is covered by existing oil and gas leases.

- (2). **Appearance of Naturalness:** The northern 1/3 of Parcel #1 is associated with the lower topographic relief of Antelope Flat. The vehicle way that forms the north boundary of the parcel has had increased activity. Also, addition ATV use has occurred. The southern 2/3 of the parcel consists of steep slopes with incised drainages associated with Dutch John Mountain. ATV usage has not increased substantially in this part of the parcel due to the steeper slopes and the appearance of naturalness has been retained. The parcel is less than 5,000 acres in size. It is contiguous with land in the Ashley National Forest that will be managed as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has stated that the lands will not be studied to determine the presence of wilderness characteristics. The parcel is less than 5,000 acres in size and is not adjacent to other federal lands being managed for wilderness characteristics or wilderness values.

Parcel #2 is substantially less than 5,000 acres in size. The small parcel is located on the rolling surface of the top of Goslin Mountain. Human-made disturbances are present within the parcel boundaries and the adjacent area. Trails and vehicle ways are noticeable within the parcel boundaries. The parcel has not retained the appearance of naturalness. It is contiguous with land in the Ashley National Forest that will be managed as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has stated that the lands will not be studied to determine the presence of wilderness characteristics. The parcel is substantially less than 5,000 acres in size and is not adjacent to other federal lands being managed for wilderness characteristics or wilderness values.

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Parcel #4 is the largest of the four parcels. The parcel is less than 5,000 acres in size. The rugged, steep slopes with numerous canyons and washes dropping rapidly to Red Creek restrict the use of ATVs in the parcel. The existing terrain and vegetation also provides screening for a sense of naturalness. The Clay Basin Road which forms the northern boundary of the parcel has been paved since 2001. Parcel #4 is contiguous with land in the Ashley National Forest that will be managed as Roadless. The U.S. Forest Service has stated that the lands will not be studied to determine the presence of wilderness characteristics. The parcel is less than 5,000 acres in size and is not adjacent to other federal lands being managed for wilderness characteristics or wilderness values.

- (3). **Solitude, Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:** Parcel #1 is smaller than 5,000 acres in size and has limited opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in the southern 2/3 of the parcel. The steeper slopes, incised drainages, and vegetation provide a visitor with the isolation needed for solitude.

Parcels #2 and #3 are so limited in size that little if any opportunity exists for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Parcel #4 is larger than the other parcels of the review area but is still less than 5,000 acres in size. The rugged, steep terrain, when coupled with vegetation will provide the visitor with solitude and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation such as hiking and climbing. The overall steepness of the parcel limits the access of motorized vehicles.

- (4). **Supplemental Values:** Scenic views and habitat for mule deer, elk, antelope, sage grouse, and raptors are present.
- (5). **Areas without wilderness characteristics:** The Vernal Field Office interdisciplinary team reviewed the four parcels of the Goslin Mountain area on February 7, 2007. The team concurred with the 1979 Home Mountain Wilderness Inventory Situation Evaluation Report for the area and the 2002 *Evaluation of New Information*. All of the parcels are segregated from each other and are less than 5,000 acres in size for each of the parcels. The U.S. Forest Service is considering their lands only to be designated as Roadless and not for wilderness characteristics. Although Parcels #1 and #4 have retained the appearance of naturalness for portions of the parcels, the interdisciplinary team determined that the four separate parcels are not contiguous with federal lands being managed for wilderness characteristics and, all less than 5,000 acres. Therefore, the Goslin Mountain area does not contain wilderness characteristics.

- b. As protocol for all VFO wilderness characteristic reviews, the Interdisciplinary Team determined appropriate set-back distances for pipelines, roads, and other R-O-Ws.