

Flat Top

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Unit

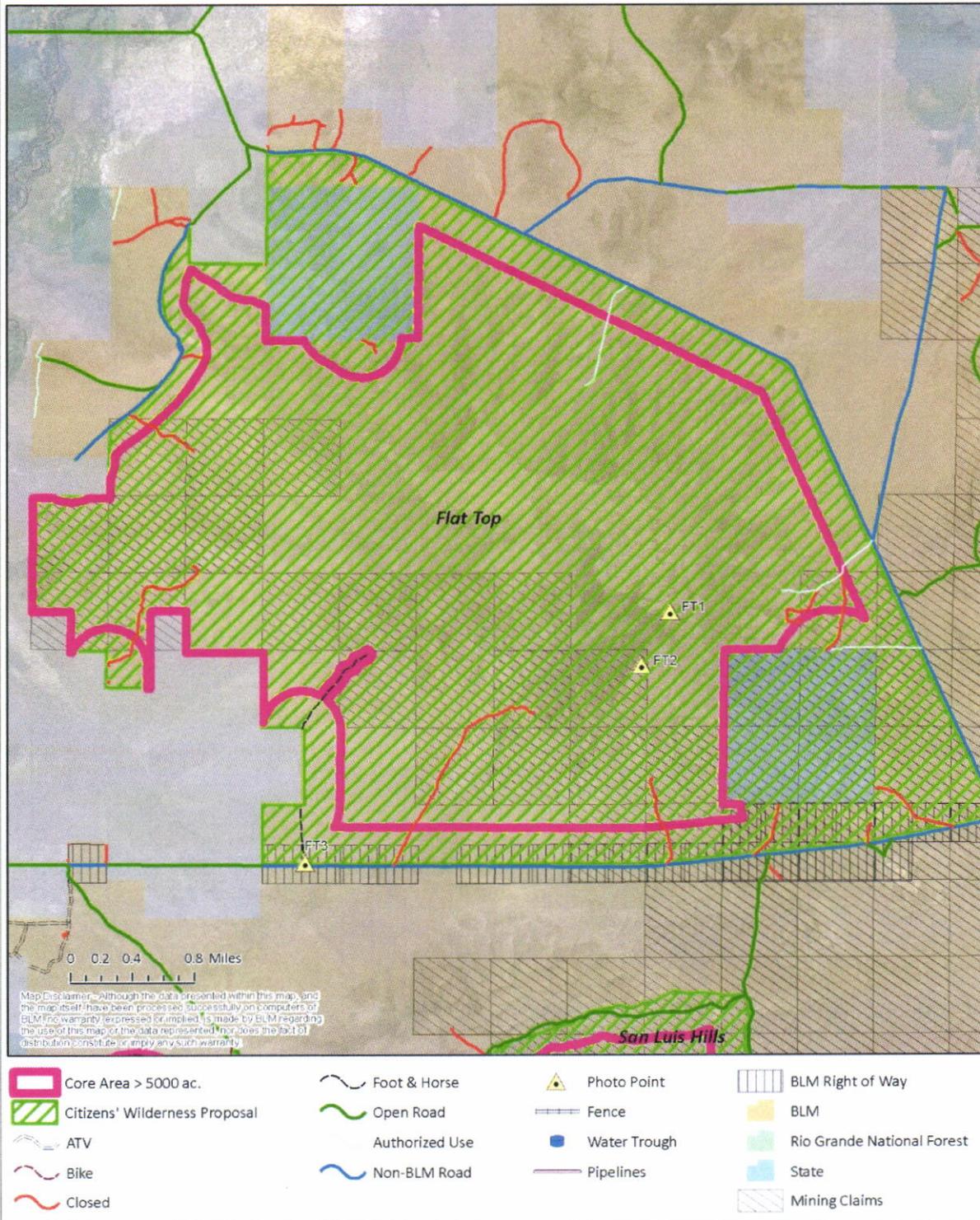


Figure 11 – Flat Top

FLAT TOP

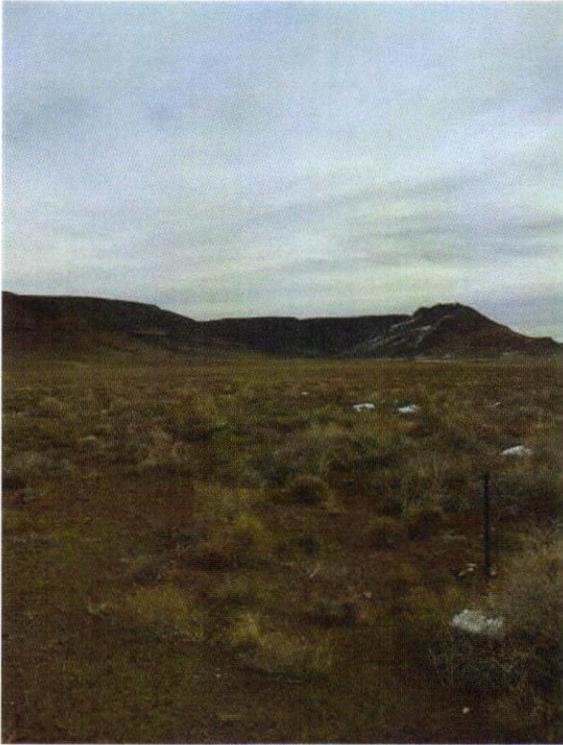


Photo Point FT3 – From SW Hwy 142 Looking NE

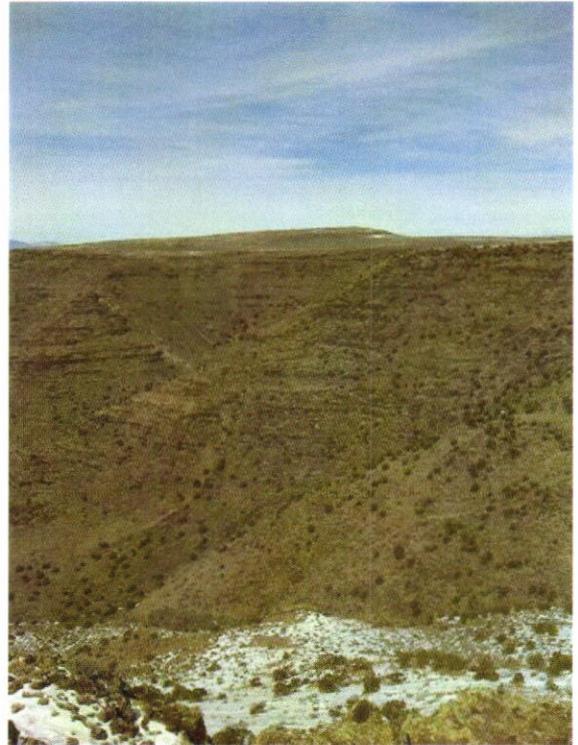


Photo Point FT2 – From SE Mesa Top Looking W

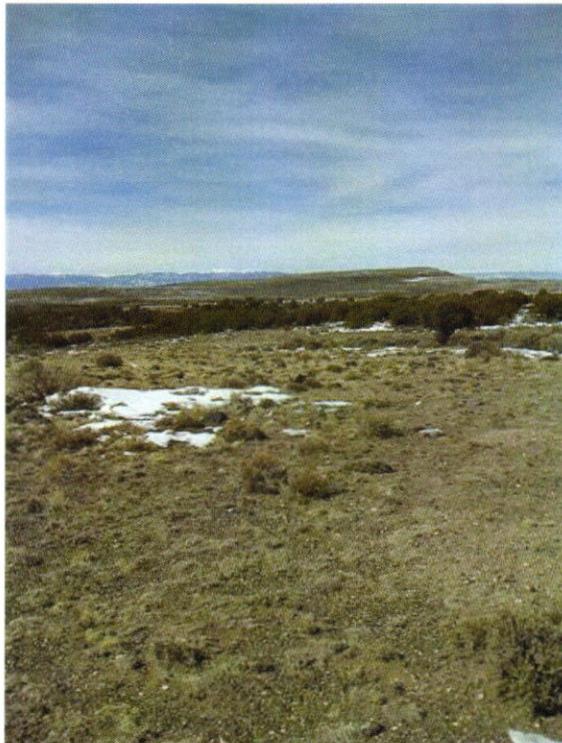


Photo Point FT1 – View of Mesa Top Looking WSW

Form 1 – Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record

(1) Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

No _____ (Go to Form 2) Yes X (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas):

- a) **Inventory Source:** 1980 BLM Colorado Intensive Wilderness Inventory
- b) **Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s):** Flat Top CO-050-140
- c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Flat Top, p.322 1980 Inventory
- d) **BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Cañon City District, San Luis Resource Area

(2) BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Inventory Source: 1980 BLM Colorado Intensive Wilderness Inventory.

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
CO-050-140	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Form 2 - Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: Flat Top CO-050-140

Acreage: 8,080 (includes nearly all BLM lands in the Colorado Wilderness Network proposal (Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal), primarily excluding 2 sections of State land included in the Citizen Wilderness Proposal not analyzed by BLM.

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below)

Yes No

Description (describe the boundaries of the area – wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

Same as the original 1980 inventory, with the following exceptions: there are now 3 active grazing leases instead of 1, 1 Right-Of-Way, and there are precisely 17 mining claims.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

Note: If “No” is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “NA” for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

Same as the original 1980 inventory, with the following exception: the 2012 re-evaluation of the Flat Top unit identified discrepancies in the naturalness of the area compared to the 1980 inventory’s assessment, due to the obvious and noticeable removal of essentially all Rocky Mountain Juniper trees mostly from the first half of the last century. This was common practice in many other areas of the San Luis Valley at that time, especially related to fencing, many of which still stand to this day. During a thorough search conducted during the inventory, the evaluation team found only one small juniper hidden from plain view that managed to escape. In that sense, it is inaccurate to portray the area as a Piñon-Juniper vegetative type, when only Piñon trees exist there. The stumps of harvested trees are common throughout the unit and represent a fairly significant imprint of man. From a distance, though, the stumps are essentially unnoticeable.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes No N/A

Description (describe the area’s outstanding opportunities for solitude):

Same as the original 1980 inventory.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes No N/A

Note: If “No” is checked for both 3 and 4, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “NA” for question 5.

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

Same as the original 1980 inventory.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value)?

Yes No N/A

Description:

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS*

Area Unique Identifier: Flat Top CO-050-140

Results of analysis:

Of the 8,080 acres analyzed, 0 acres have wilderness characteristics.

The Flat Top unit was originally evaluated in the 1980 BLM Colorado Intensive Wilderness Inventory and was not found to possess wilderness characteristics at that time. BLM re-evaluated this area in 2012 because it met the criteria as a core roadless area of 5,000 acres or greater, and also because the unit was included as part of a citizen's wilderness proposal. The evaluation team and consultants concurred with BLM's original findings from the 1980 inventory, which found the unit to not possess wilderness characteristics.

The 2012 re-evaluation characterizes the Flat Top unit as a sparsely vegetated mesa flanked on all sides by open, uniform terrain transitioning to fairly steep slopes that lead to the flat mesa top. The unit's lack of sufficient topographic and vegetative diversity, and proximity to the sights and sounds of man relative to Colorado Highway 142, prevent the area's solitude or primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities from being considered 'outstanding'. Additionally, the noticeable removal of essentially all Rocky Mountain Juniper trees from the first half of the last century represents an obvious imprint of man and raises doubts about the naturalness of the unit as well.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes No N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes No N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes No N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.



The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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(Name, Title, Date)

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: Andrew Ahlert Title: Field Manager

Date: 3 July 2012

***This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.**