
Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier **CO-S05000-007 Adobe Badlands WSA Adjacent**
 Acreage **16,520 acres**

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes X No

Description: This unit is consists of public lands surrounding Adobe Badlands WSA, near the city of Delta, CO.

The largest subunit (subunit A [15,230 acres] on the map) is bordered on the north by Grand Mesa National Forest; on the west by Mesa Point Road; on south by the Western Energy Corridor right-of-way, US Highway 50, and by private land; and on the east by Alkali Basin Road and Adobe Badlands WSA. The northern 3 miles of Alkali Basin Road is no longer maintained and does not meet the criteria of a wilderness inventory road. Therefore, this subunit is adjacent to Adobe Badlands WSA. The lower, southern part of the subunit is open salt-desert shrub/grass lands consisting of flat benches separated by moderately incised parallel drainages. The northern part of the subunit is piñon-juniper woodlands, and is more varied topographically than the lower part of the subunit. This area features rocky bluffs and steep terrain. The upper reaches of Alkali Creek within this subunit support riparian vegetation. The southernmost 940 acres of this subunit are separated from the rest of the subunit by powerlines. This piece is excluded from the subunit, and does not meet any of the size criteria. This leaves 14,290 acres in subunit A that meet the size criteria based on acreage and adjacency.

Subunit B (130 acres) is located near the northeast corner of the WSA, and is separated from the WSA by West Pipeline Road, a constructed and maintained road. It is therefore not adjacent to the WSA and does not meet any of the size criteria.

Subunit C (280 acres) is located between the eastern boundary of the WSA and West Pipeline Road. The northern portion of this subunit consists of piñon-juniper woodlands, and the southern part is generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands. Though it is small in size, it meets the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunit D (440 acres) is located between the eastern boundary of the WSA and West Pipeline Road. It is generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands, dominated by Dry Fork Reservoir. Though it is small in size, it meets the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunits E (100 acres), F (80 acres) and G (40 acres) are each small parcels along the southern and southeastern border of the WSA. Each is separated from the WSA by

powerlines and associated constructed and maintained maintenance roads. They are therefore not adjacent to the WSA, and do not meet any of the size criteria.

Subunits H (70 acres) and I (150 acres) are located between Alkali Basin Road and the WSA boundary. They are both generally flat, sparsely vegetated shrublands. Though they are both small in size, they meet the size criteria by virtue of being adjacent to the WSA.

Subunits A, C, D, H and I meet the size criteria. Their combined acreage (15,230) is carried forward for further analysis, below.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

Description:

In subunit A (14,290 acres) most of the southern half of the subunit has an unnatural appearance. From the vicinity of Wells Gulch Road south of the road's switchbacks, and south and east to Alkali Basin Road the area shows significant alteration from natural conditions. Evidence of lack of naturalness includes ponds, contour furrows, water catchments, constructed and maintained roads, other vehicle routes, canals, and altered contouring of natural drainages. 6,910 acres of subunit A do not possess naturalness, leaving 7,380 acres that appear to be natural. Much of the western part of this subunit is within an "unexploded ordinance area" (UXO). The area was used in the past as an artillery training area, and a number of unexploded shells have been recovered. An unknown number remain in the subunit. Nearly all of this subunit is leased for oil and gas.

Although subunit C (280 acres) has a few vehicle routes within the subunit, they do not dominate the area. On the whole, the entire subunit appears to be natural.

Subunit D (440 acres) is dominated by Dry Fork Reservoir, vehicle maintenance routes, drainage-capture structures, fences and weeds. The entire subunit lacks naturalness.

Subunits H (70 acres) and I (150 acres) are both dominated by alterations related to stock pond developments (excavations, dams and water-capture contouring). Both subunits lack naturalness.

The remainder of subunit A (7,380 acres) and subunit C (280 acres) appear to be natural and are carried forward for further analysis below. Their combined acreage is 7,660 acres.

(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:

The western portion of subunit A is mostly flat, open shrublands that are close to Mesa Point Road, a major power corridor, and its associated access roads. Solitude is the absence of sights and sounds of other people; with very little topographic or vegetative screening, this area (1,200 acres) lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. The remainder of the unit (6,180 acres) offers both topographic and vegetative screening, and is more remote from the sights and sounds of others, and does offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Subunit C (280 acres) is entirely within close proximity to West Pipeline Road, which comprises most of the subunit's boundary. No part of the subunit is more than 1,000 feet from the road, and most of it is much closer. This subunit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The total acreage with outstanding opportunities for solitude is 6,180.

(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

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

The western portion of subunit A is mostly flat, open shrublands that are close to Mesa Point Road, a major power corridor, and its associated access roads. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation means a lack of recreational developments, minimal regulation of recreational use, and access via primitive (non-motorized and non-mechanized) means. Although this portion of subunit A has no recreation developments and minimal regulation of recreational use, because of the adjacent roads and developments the access to this portion of the subunit is primarily by motorized and mechanized means. While opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation still exist in this corner of the subunit, the opportunities are not outstanding, therefore 1,200 acres of subunit A do not possess this characteristic. The remainder of the unit (6,180 acres) is removed from roads, does not have recreation developments, and is minimally regulated, and therefore does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Subunit C (280 acres) is entirely within close proximity to West Pipeline Road, which comprises most of the subunit's boundary. No part of the subunit is more than 1,000 feet from the road, and most of it is much closer. Although there are opportunities for unconfined recreation, this subunit does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation.

The total acreage with outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation is 6,180.

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

Yes X No N/A

Description:

The area contains part of the Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Summary of Analysis*

*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.

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Summary

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

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 acreage of lands with wilderness characteristics within the unit is 6,180.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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