

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Date of Submission: *December 30, 2003*

Date(s) of Field Office Review: *December, 2006- February, 2007*

Submitter: *SUWA*

Name of Area to be Reviewed: *Westwater Canyon*

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: *Moab*

EVALUATION

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

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 gathered and reviewed in prior BLM inventories; photographic documentation; etc?

The area reviewed was derived from a GIS Data Layer provided by the proponent. New information such as maps, photographs, or narratives were not included.

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

_____ a) the decision reached in previous BLM inventories that the area lacks wilderness characteristics is still valid.

(or)

X 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.

See attached narrative

5. Document all information considered during the interdisciplinary team review (e.g. aerial photographs, state and county road information, road maintenance agreements, documentation from prior BLM inventories, field observations, maps, master title plats, evidence presented as new information by a proponent, etc.)

During the course of the interdisciplinary team review, Moab BLM undertook the following steps:

In late 2006 and early 2007, BLM used GIS information to identify potential impacts on naturalness including county road data (previously verified as part of travel plan formulation), verified motorcycle routes, county-provided intrusion data, and local GIS data on range improvements, oil and gas wells, vegetative manipulations (especially chainings), and community pits. Master Title Plat data available from the State Office GIS was examined for rights-of-way.

BLM Moab next undertook a detailed review of high resolution aerial photos from 2006 to both verify information from the GIS review, as well as to look for additional impacts not incorporated in GIS. These impacts could include such things as seismic exploration lines not included in the county road inventory and other disturbances from past minerals activities. Much of the new acreage was cut off from the larger unit by roads, other impacts and/or State lands, and failed to meet the size criterion as stand-alone units.

The above steps enabled Moab BLM to prepare a map showing what remaining areas were likely to possess naturalness. Moab BLM convened an interdisciplinary review team meeting on January 11, 2007, to review the findings from the above steps. Team members were asked to provide information which either supported or refuted these findings, based on both specialized resource expertise and field experience. Based on input from this review, Moab BLM incorporated any necessary changes into its analysis.

The following specific documents and files were utilized:

1. Grand County road inventory (GIS)
2. Grand County intrusion data (GIS)
3. Buckhorn, Little Hole range allotment files
4. NAIP 2006 aerial photos (GIS)
5. Vegetative treatments (local GIS)
6. Range improvements (local GIS)
7. 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory file (Westwater Canyon)
8. 2003 Wilderness Inventory revision document
9. Mel's Loop South motorcycle route (GIS)
10. UWC Proposed Wilderness GIS Data Layer (2005)

6. List the members of the interdisciplinary team and resource specialties represented.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Resource(s) Represented</i>
<i>Bill Stevens</i>	<i>Wilderness, GIS, Recreation</i>

<i>Ann Marie Aubry</i>	<i>Hydrology, Soils</i>
<i>Brent Northrup</i>	<i>Minerals, RMP Team Lead</i>
<i>Chad Niehaus</i>	<i>Recreation</i>
<i>Daryl Trotter</i>	<i>Botany, NEPA coordinator</i>
<i>Donna Turnipseed</i>	<i>Cultural, Paleontology</i>
<i>Katie Stevens</i>	<i>Recreation, Planning</i>
<i>Lynn Jackson</i>	<i>Geology, Minerals, Associate FO Manager</i>
<i>Pam Riddle</i>	<i>Wildlife</i>
<i>David Williams</i>	<i>Range</i>
<i>Maggie Wyatt</i>	<i>Field Office Manager</i>

Field Office Manager /s/ Maggie Wyatt

Date 3/9/07

This determination is part of an interim step in BLM's internal decision-making process and does not constitute a decision that can be appealed.

Analysis of Citizens' Proposals for Wilderness Characteristics

Westwater Canyon

The Citizens' Proposal for this area includes acreage in the Westwater Canyon WSA, the Westwater WIA and acreage not previously analyzed. Only the acreage not previously analyzed will be addressed here.

To possess wilderness characteristics, lands must possess naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. According to the 1964 Wilderness Act, these outstanding opportunities generally require a land mass of 5000 acres or more. An exception to this are those lands which adjoin other lands already judged to possess wilderness characteristics, as the opportunities need be present *somewhere* in the larger unit. In the case of Westwater Canyon, no unit would be large enough to potentially qualify as a stand-alone unit; it could possess wilderness characteristics by association with the contiguous WSA or WIA previously found to possess wilderness characteristics.

The acreage can be divided into four separate units (see accompanying map).

Unit 1 is very small and bisected by a road and a water pipeline, leaving a small amount of natural acreage attached to the WSA. It possesses wilderness characteristics in association with the contiguous WSA.

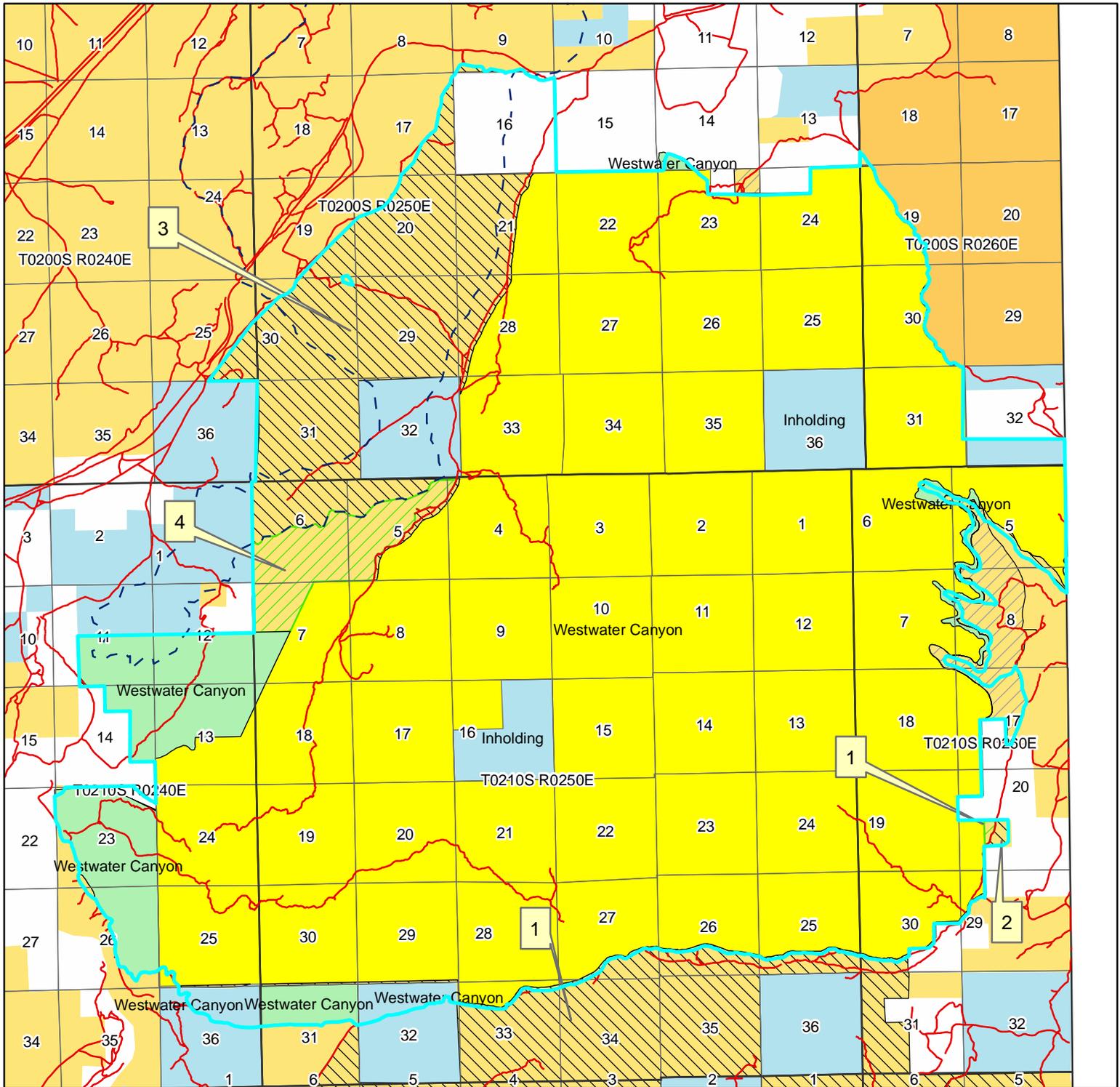
Unit 2 is cut off from the larger unit by the aforementioned pipeline, and is too small to possess wilderness characteristics as a stand-alone unit.

Unit 3 is a larger unit, but bisected by a major road and bounded on the south by a heavily used and substantially noticeable motorcycle route. It is too small to stand to possess wilderness characteristics as a stand-alone unit.

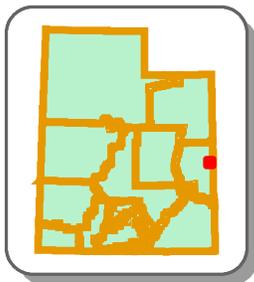
Unit 4 is natural and adjoins the WSA. It possesses wilderness characteristics in association with the contiguous WSA.

The following is a list by unit and acres of lands with wilderness characteristics:

Unit 1:	12 acres
Unit 4:	746 acres
Total:	758 acres



1:87,267



Legend

- Grand Co Identified Routes
- Wilderness Study Area
- - "Mel's loop south" motorcycle route

1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory

- WC
- WC isolated by State
- NWC

Wilderness Characteristics Review

- NWC
- WC



Land Status

- Bureau of Land Management
- Military Reservations
- BLM Wilderness Area
- State Lands
- National Forest
- Private Lands
- National Park Service
- Water
- Indian Lands

CAUTION:
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have plotting errors due to source data.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

