

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS REVIEW

Date of Submission: N/A

Date(s) of Field Office Review: 02/06/2007

Submitter: N/A

Name of Area to be Reviewed: The Tabernacle (A-B)

BLM Field Office(s) Affected: Monticello

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 Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC). Additional materials 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:

X a) the decision reached in previous BLM inventories, that the area lacks wilderness characteristics, 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.

Size:

The Tabernacle area proposed by the UWC for wilderness consideration is approximately 7,441 acres, collectively. The Tabernacle area was inventoried during the initial phase of the inventory in 1979 and was not carried forward into the proposed field inventory because the area was determined not to be natural in character. Because the area was inventoried and no documentation has been received in addition to the GIS data layer, this is not considered to be new information. The current inventory area has been divided into two separate areas by a vehicle route extending to a landfill adjacent to state lands and a point to point boundary to exclude intrusive surface disturbances. Unit A (western parcel) is approximately 6,459 acres, and thus meets the size requirement for wilderness management. Unit B (eastern parcel) is approximately 982 acres, and is not contiguous to a WSA, lands having been identified as having wilderness characteristics, or lands that have been administratively endorsed for wilderness management by another land management agency. Because of these factors, Unit B does not meet the 5,000 size requirement for wilderness management and will not be analyzed.

Appearance of Naturalness:

The ID team reviewed the area within Unit A using GIS data layers, which included recent aerial photography (August 2006), San Juan County Road Data, og-wells GIS Layer, range allotment files, and Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Data. The ID Team 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. ID Team members have visited this area over several years while administering their respective resources. Team members have identified two major intrusions that extend into Unit A; these are the main paved access road into Goosenecks State Park and the access road to the Honaker trailhead. Both of these roads and supporting facilities have been cherry-stemmed from the unit. Other minor intrusions include several old wells within the unit. Overall, the remaining 6,459 acres within the area are natural in character and appear to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature.

Outstanding opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The terrain of the inventory area is relatively flat with minimal topographic relief. Views are extensive throughout the unit because of minimal vegetative screening. State Park facilities are highly visible and all vehicle traffic that utilizes the trail head or Gooseneck Overlook can be seen from most areas of the unit.

While opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation are present in Unit A, they are not outstanding. The only areas where any opportunity for solitude may be found are down below the canyon rim. However, these areas are visible from the State Park Overlook and from the Honaker Trailhead, and thus the sense of an outstanding opportunity is lacking. Because these opportunities are not outstanding, the area within Unit A, while natural in character, is determined not to possess wilderness characteristics.

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.)

Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC) GIS Data Layer Proposal (2005)

Perkins Brothers Allotment File

Master Title Plats

Law Enforcement Patrol Logs: Cedar Mesa Sector

GIS Aerial Photography (NAIP 2006: San Juan County north and south)

GIS Oil and Gas Data (og-wells)

Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario for Oil and Gas (2005)

Mineral Potential Report (2005)

BLM Utah Final Initial Wilderness Inventory (1979)

San Juan Resource Area Management Plan (1991)

Analysis of the Management Situation (2005)

Attachments:

- *Map of The Tabernacle Units (A-B)*

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

NAME	RESOURCE (S) REPRESENTED
Gary Torres	Planner, NEPA Coordinator
Brad Colin	Recreation, OHV, Wilderness
Jed Carling	Range
Maxine Deeter	Lands, VRM
Marie Tuxhorn	Law Enforcement
Doug Paul	Fire, Fuels
Nick Sandberg	Range, Assistant Field Manager
Sandra Meyers	Field Manager
Brian Quigley	Recreation
Tammy Wallace	Wildlife
Nancy Shearin	Cultural, Paleontology
Jeff Brown	Oil and Gas, Hazardous Materials
Ted McDougall	Minerals
Paul Curtis	Range, Riparian, Soils, Vegetation
Dave Mermejo	BLM Utah State Office
Paul Leatherbury	GIS

Field Office Manager _____

Date _____.

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.