

## 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: White Canyon

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:

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

**Size:**

*The White Canyon area proposed by the UWC for wilderness consideration is approximately 6,292 acres. This area was reviewed during the Initial Wilderness Inventory Proposals in 1979 as part of the larger Gravel Canyon and Long Canyon Unit (UT-060-179), and was not carried forward for intensive field inventory, but much of the area was later re-inventoried in the 1999 Wilderness Re-inventory as the Gravel/Long Canyons WIA, and was found to possess wilderness character. The White Canyon area was not included in the 1999 inventory. It is separated from the Gravel/ Long Canyons WIA along the southern boundary by the Short Canyon road and from the Fort Knocker WIA on the western boundary by a boundary road. The eastern boundary of the unit is separated from the Dark Canyon WIA and the Sheep Canyon WIA on the north by the Indian Head Pass Road. An area approximately 300 acres in size on the southwest corner of the unit (see attached map) is separated from the rest of the unit by state land and the Fort Knocker WIA boundary road. This 300 acre parcel has been determined not to possess wilderness character based upon its small size. The rest of the White Canyon area as proposed is not contiguous to any lands found to possess wilderness character, but it does meet the size requirements for wilderness management.*

**Appearance of Naturalness:**

*The ID team reviewed the area using GIS data layers, which included recent aerial photography (August 2006), San Juan County Road Data, oil-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. The initial 1979 Inventory Proposals identified mineral exploration and some production along the upper mesa tops as the primary reason for excluding the area from intensive field inventory. ID Team members have visited this area over several years while administering their respective resources, and have noted that the area contains minimal human disturbances, such as one minor vehicle route, which is seldom used. The area contains no other known landscape scale surface disturbances, such as major highways, significant recreation development, etc. The Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario indicates minimal oil and gas activity in the area. Law enforcement patrol logs indicate limited Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) activity in the area other than what has been described previously. Therefore, with minimal human impacts in the area, the area appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature and is natural in character.*

**Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:**

*With minimal evidence of human disturbances, opportunities for solitude can be found throughout the area but more so along the southern boundary where the landscape consists of a varied topography and vegetative screening. Opportunities for primitive recreation uses such as hiking and photography are available.*

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)*

*White Canyon Allotment File*

*Master Title Plats*

*Law Enforcement Patrol Logs: Southwest Canyons 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 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory Revision (May 2003)*

*San Juan Resource Area Management Plan (1991)*

*Analysis of the Management Situation (2005)*

**Attachments:**

- *Map of White Canyon Unit*

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

<b>NAME</b>	<b>RESOURCE (S) REPRESENTED</b>
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.