

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: Red Rock Plateau (A-B-C)

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 Red Rock Plateau area proposed by the UWC for wilderness consideration is approximately 62,124 acres. Therefore, the overall area as proposed does meet the 5,000 acres wilderness character size requirement. However, three substantial vehicle routes have bisected the unit into three sections, and thus each unit will be analyzed separately. Unit A is approximately 17,011 acres, Unit B is approximately 38,918 acres, and Unit C is approximately 6,195 acres. Each of the three units meets the 5,000 acres size requirement for wilderness management.

The areas within Units B-C contain significant human disturbances, such as mining activity and multiple access roads, which are substantially noticeable. Therefore, it has been determined that these areas do not possess natural character, and thus 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.

The Red Rock Plateau area was reviewed during the 1979 Initial Wilderness Proposals as part of the Red Canyon Wilderness Proposal (UT-060-180). This review process identified numerous surface disturbances, such as mining exploration and production activities. These disturbances were the primary reasons for not carrying the unit forward for intensive field inventory. ID Team members have visited the area over several years while administering their respective resources, and have noted that many of the disturbances identified in 1979 are still visible below the mesa tops along the west side of the unit. These impacts are still considered to be substantially noticeable and naturalness in this area is compromised. The mesa tops that comprise Unit A contain minimal disturbances. The few access routes to the top of the mesas receive minimal use from Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) traffic and are rehabilitating naturally. The Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario indicates minimal oil and gas activity in the area. Therefore, with minimal human impacts in the area, Unit A 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 in Unit A, opportunities for solitude can be found throughout the area. It has been noted by ID team members that even in some of the areas below the mesa tops, which are lacking in naturalness, it is possible for visitors to obtain an outstanding sense of solitude. Opportunities for primitive recreation uses such as hiking, photography and rockhounding 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)*
- Lake Canyon and White Canyon Allotment Files*
- Master Title Plats*
- Law Enforcement Patrol Logs: Cedar Mesa and 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 Red Rock Plateau Units A-B-C*

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.