

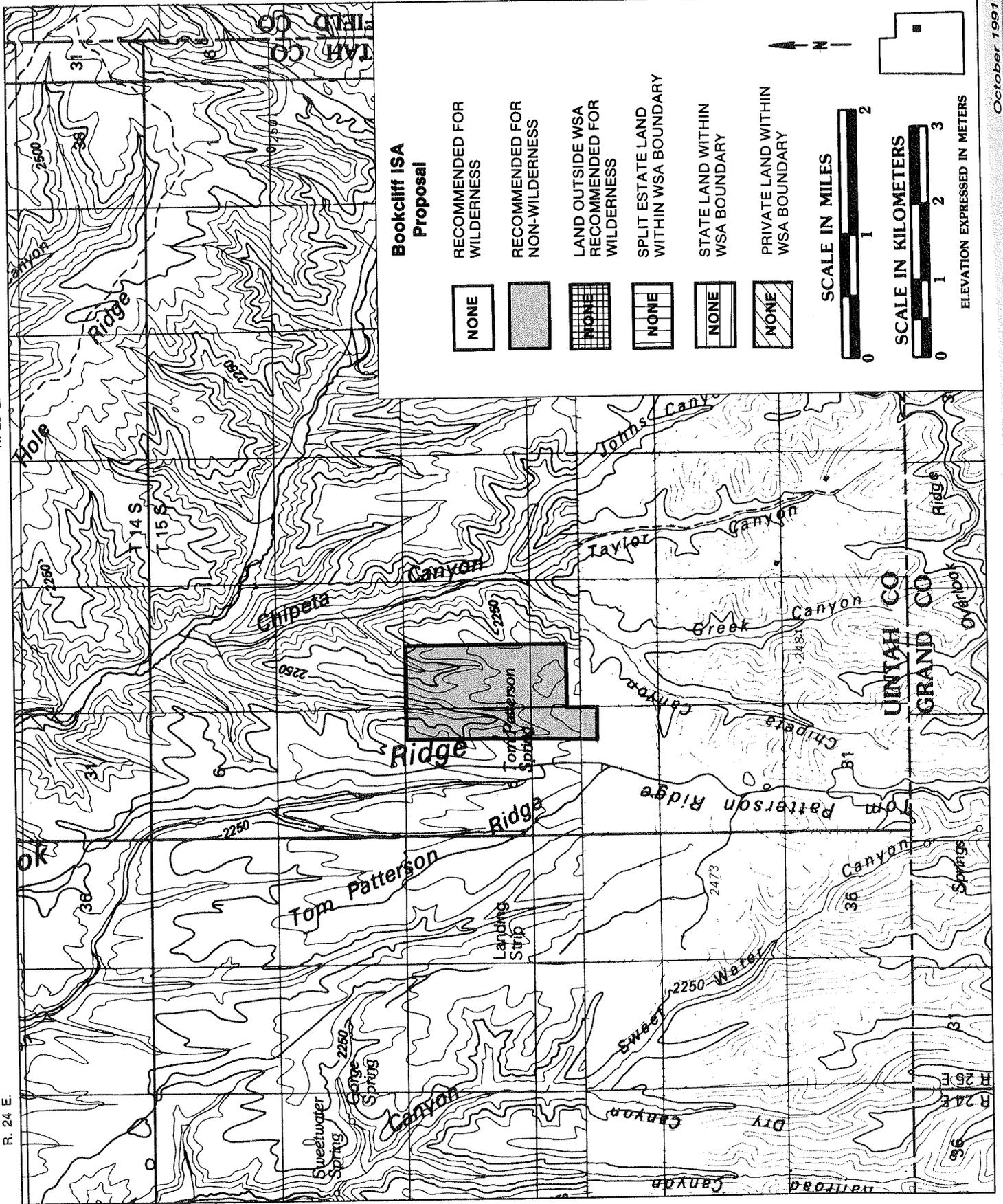
Book Cliffs Mountain Browse
Instant Study Area

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BOOK CLIFFS MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA

STATISTICAL SUMMARY
 BOOK CLIFFS INSTANT STUDY AREA (MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA)
 UINTAH COUNTY, UTAH - VERNAL DISTRICT

	Previously Designated Area	Contiguous Lands (if Any)	Total
<u>Acres with Wilderness Characteristics</u>	0	None	0
<u>Acres without Wilderness Characteristics Recommended Against Designation</u>	400	None	0
Total	400	None	0

Ownership in Study Area (October 29, 1968)

BLM	400 Acres
Forest Service	0 Acres
Private	0 Acres

Recommendation

The Bookcliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area is recommended as non-suitable for preservation as wilderness.

Vernal District Manager Bart Bonnia (ACTING) 4-4-80
Date

Utah State Director Ray J. Wild APR 18 1980
Date

Director /s/ Robert F. Burford July 22, 1983
Date

BOOK CLIFFS MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- A. Results of the Review for Wilderness Characteristics. This area was reviewed under the authority of Section 603(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and in accordance with Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

The intensive wilderness inventory of the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area revealed:

1. The area does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work being substantially unnoticeable.
2. The area does not have outstanding opportunities for solitude.
3. The area does not have outstanding opportunities for a primitive or unconfined type of recreation.

- B. Economic and Social Impacts.

The recommendation will not create any significant impacts on economic and social aspects of the study area and surrounding region.

- C. Long-Term and Short-Term Effects

The Natural Area is recommended to be managed according to the pre-FLPMA guidelines as stated in the Book Cliffs' Unit Resource Analysis. No short-term effects are associated with the recommendation. The long-term effect will be to maintain and preserve a 400-acre representative area of the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse vegetative type for scientific and ecological study.

- D. Options Foregone if the Recommendations are Adopted

The option of the area becoming a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) will be foregone if the recommendation is adopted.

- E. Study Area Summary and Recommendation

Book Cliffs Instant Study Area (Mountain Browse Natural Area)

This Instant Study Area (ISA) is located approximately 75 air miles south of Vernal, Utah and 50 air miles northwest of

Grand Junction, Colorado. It contains 400 acres of public land. General vegetation includes primarily sagebrush and squaw-apple with small thickets of Gambel Oak, serviceberry and Mountain mahogany. The topography is a gentle rolling ridge top which gradually slopes downhill to the north and east. Private land borders a portion of the eastern boundary. The rest of the ISA is surrounded by BLM-administered lands. Lands contiguous to the ISA were reviewed for wilderness characteristics during the initial inventory, and it was determined that none of the surrounding land contained wilderness characteristics and was dropped from the wilderness review process in September 1979.

Naturalness

Naturalness is not outstanding because of a fence, way, and spraying. The cumulative effect is that the visitor senses the presence of man.

The bladed fenceline and barbed wire fence divides the ISA. The blading and lineal imprint makes the fence visually noticeable.

A way runs through the western half of the ISA and ends at the fence. The way is used for access by hunters in the fall. Though not maintained, it is an imprint that shows the evidence of man.

The aerial spraying along the western edge of the ISA is visually evident. In the sprayed area, remains of woody shrubs still exist, and ground cover changes from predominantly shrubs to grass.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude

The 400-acre ISA is not of sufficient size to gain a sense of isolation or freedom of movement with minimal contact with others. There is a lack of areas where an individual can find seclusion. Minimal topographic relief and smallness of size make it easy to spot others in the ISA although vegetation provides some natural screening.

BOOK CLIFFS MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA

Outstanding Opportunity for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The ISA offers very little primitive or unconfined recreational opportunity due to its small size. No outstanding vistas or sense of vastness exist. No running water exists on the ISA. Because the ISA is gently rolling, the topography presents no special challenge or interest.

The vegetation is not unique to this ISA only, as the mountain browse type grows along most of the Book Cliffs Divide. For those interested in the scientific aspects, the ISA has botanical sightseeing features.

No archaeological or paleontological sites were recorded during the survey of the ISA.

Recommendation

The Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area is being recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation and is recommended to retain its present status as a natural area for its ecological and scientific qualities.

No additional support needs or resource commitments will be needed to implement the proposal. The proposal will require no change in management actions. The Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area is to be continued to be managed by prior guidelines as identified in the Book Cliffs URA.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Statement on Previous Designation

On October 29, 1968, the area known as the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area, located at T15S, R25E, Sec. 17, SW1/4; Sec. 18, E1/2 SE1/4; Sec. 19, E1/2 NE1/4; Sec. 20, N1/2, NW1/4, SLBM was designated as a natural area. The area was classified for multiple use with livestock grazing being administratively excluded from the area. The area has been segregated from all forms of appropriation, including general mining laws and the mineral leasing laws.

B. Significant Resource Data

The area is a representative sample of the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse vegetative type. Dominant species include birchleaf mahogany, serviceberry, antelope bitter-

brush, Gamble oak, and big sagebrush. No threatened or endangered vegetation exists. The ISA has limited importance as a wildlife habitat area because of its small size and similar surrounding terrain.

C. Description of Report Area

The surrounding area is characterized as an intermediate mountain plateau. Elevation ranges up to 8,900 feet. Climate is semi-arid with wide temperature variations. The plateau slopes gently to the north and is cut by steep canyons that drain to the northwest. Outcroppings of exposed sedimentary rock of sandstone, shales, and siltstone occur. Soil depth is shallow to medium. Four major vegetative types occur: mixed desert shrub, pinyon-juniper, sagebrush grass, and mountain browse.

The area is zoned for grazing and mining by Uintah County. All public lands are classified for multiple use. Primary land use value is livestock grazing followed by wildlife habitat. Natural gas exploration and production has recently occurred in the area. There is no, or potential for, residential areas, and no industrial-commercial development is expected. Nonproductive forest stands and non-forest lands are characteristic of the area. The area provides mule deer habitat and receives moderately heavy deer hunting pressure. Hunting is the primary use.

D. Summary of Public Participation

1. Description of Process

a. Goals of the public participation were:

To gain public acceptance of the BLM review procedure.

To inform the public about how to participate and make comments on the wilderness inventory.

To notify the public about the final recommendation and decision on the ISA.

b. Process

A District Office news release announced the beginning of the field inventory and encouraged

BOOK CLIFFS MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA

public participation. Local news media and governmental agencies were contacted.

c. Local Opinions Assessed

District personnel recorded any public reaction observed through formal contacts or discussions. Newspapers were checked for editorials, articles, and published letters.

d. Public Comment Period

An information packet was mailed to individuals and groups on the District's mailing list. A letter was enclosed describing the status of the ISA inventory and solicited opinions and recommendations. Articles were prepared for the local media that encouraged comments on the proposed decision. Neither a public meeting or open house was held by the District due to lack of public interest to the ISA inventory.

e. Final Decision

A District news release will be coordinated with the Washington Office and the State Office releases.

Congress. Four comments favored wilderness designation. These were general in nature and did not provide any information or rationale regarding the proposed decision to drop Book Cliffs ISA from further wilderness consideration. One comment did not indicate whether or not he agreed with the findings of the inventory or if the area should be considered for wilderness designation.

A copy of each of these comments is in the Vernal District's Permanent Documentation File.

2. Public Comments Summary Analysis

A 30-day public comment period was held from January 17, 1980 to February 15, 1980. Eleven comments were received. A summary of the content of the comments follow:

Six comments agreed with the inventory findings that the ISA lacks wilderness characteristics.

Four comments generally favored wilderness but no specific reasons were given that pertained to the Book Cliffs ISA.

One comment expressed no support, opposition or substantive comments on wilderness.

Analysis

Eleven comments were received in response to the findings of the wilderness characteristics inventory conducted on the Book Cliffs ISA. Six of the comments agreed with the inventory findings that the ISA lacks the appropriate wilderness characteristics and should not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by

BOOK CLIFFS MOUNTAIN BROWSE NATURAL AREA

APPENDIX A - ARCHAEOLOGICAL CLEARANCE SURVEY

Introduction: An archaeological survey was conducted on June 20, 1979 by Nancy Coulan, archaeologist, and Tina Gornick and Earle Smith, both wilderness inventory specialists from the BLM Vernal District Office, for the wilderness inventory of a natural area. The 400-acre natural area is located between Moccasin Trail Canyon and Chipeta Canyon in Uintah County, Utah. Because the public has an interest in the preservation and protection of archaeological, anthropological and paleontological resources, the Federal government has a clear mandate to inventory such resources.

Purpose of the Survey: The purpose of an archaeological survey is to locate, describe and record those prehistoric and historic cultural remains which either: 1) have the potential of yielding significant information about the past; 2) are the sites of known significant events in recorded history, and/or 3) are exemplary of the style of remains for a particular time period. Prehistoric remains are unknown in the area. Paleontological remains common to the Green River Formation (microfossils) could be expected. Historical remains can include anything from isolated Ute or EuroAmerican artifacts to permanent structures.

Location: The natural area is located between McCook Ridge and Chipeta Canyon on the USGS 7.5" quadrangle of Tome Patterson Canyon, Utah at T15S, R25E, SW1/4 of Section 17; E1/2 SE1/4 of Section 18; E1/2 NE1/4 of Section 19; and N1/2 NW1/4 of Section 20.

Survey Setting: Since the parcel is presently a fenced natural area at an elevation of roughly 7,800 feet (2,340 m), the vegetation is dominated by dense and snarled Book Cliffs Mountain Browse, composed of Cercocarpus, Amelanchier, Quercus, Prunus.

Modern disturbance is minimal and is evidenced by a dirt road.

Survey Procedure: Instead of carefully examining the entire area, a 1 percent random sample was made. This was because the vegetation was so dense and impenetrable that the ground surface was barely visible. The sample selected was a mile-long transect begun arbitrarily at the SW corner of Section 17. East was the direction walked as selected from a random numbers table. The mile-long transect was roughly 20 meters wide, with three people spaced 7 meters apart. This transect shape was selected as more effective statistically since there is a greater probability of discovering sites with long, thin transects than with quadrants that cover an equivalent area.

Survey Results: Neither archaeological nor paleontological remains were observed. While this could possibly be attributed to poor surface visibility, for the cultural material at least it is more likely that the area was not used historically or prehistorically. The Book Cliffs Mountain Browse as the indigenous vegetation type would effectively repel any but the most limited activity (like hunting). Therefore, on the basis of the 1 percent sample transect we expect nothing significant in the entire natural area.

Recommendations: No archaeological or paleontological sites or isolated finds were recorded during the survey of the natural area; however the dense vegetation made observation of the ground surface difficult. Since we extrapolated to the whole area on the basis of a sample, it is recommended that the area be reexamined by a qualified archaeologist when the vegetation is not as dense.

/s/ Nancy Coulan
BLM Archaeologist

WILDERNESS INTENSIVE INVENTORY

WILDERNESS SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION:

Inventory Unit No.: Bookcliffs Instant Study Area
Area Name: Bookcliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area
District: Vernal State: Utah

II. SUMMARY:

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis

1. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes X No
2. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type recreation? Yes X No
3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes X* No
4. Does the area have supplemental values? X, Yes No

* Though not meeting size requirements, it was studied for wilderness characteristics because it is an identified Instant Study Area.

III. RECOMMENDATION:

Check one:

 Area should be approved as a WSA.

 X Area does not qualify for wilderness study.

 A portion of the area should be approved as a WSA for further study and reported to the President. The restrictions imposed by Section 603 will no longer apply (reference to map) on the remainder of the area.

A. Area Manager: Dean L. Evans Date 1-8-80

acting District Manager: Ralph J. [Signature] Date 1/9/80

IV. APPROVAL:

State Director: _____ Date _____