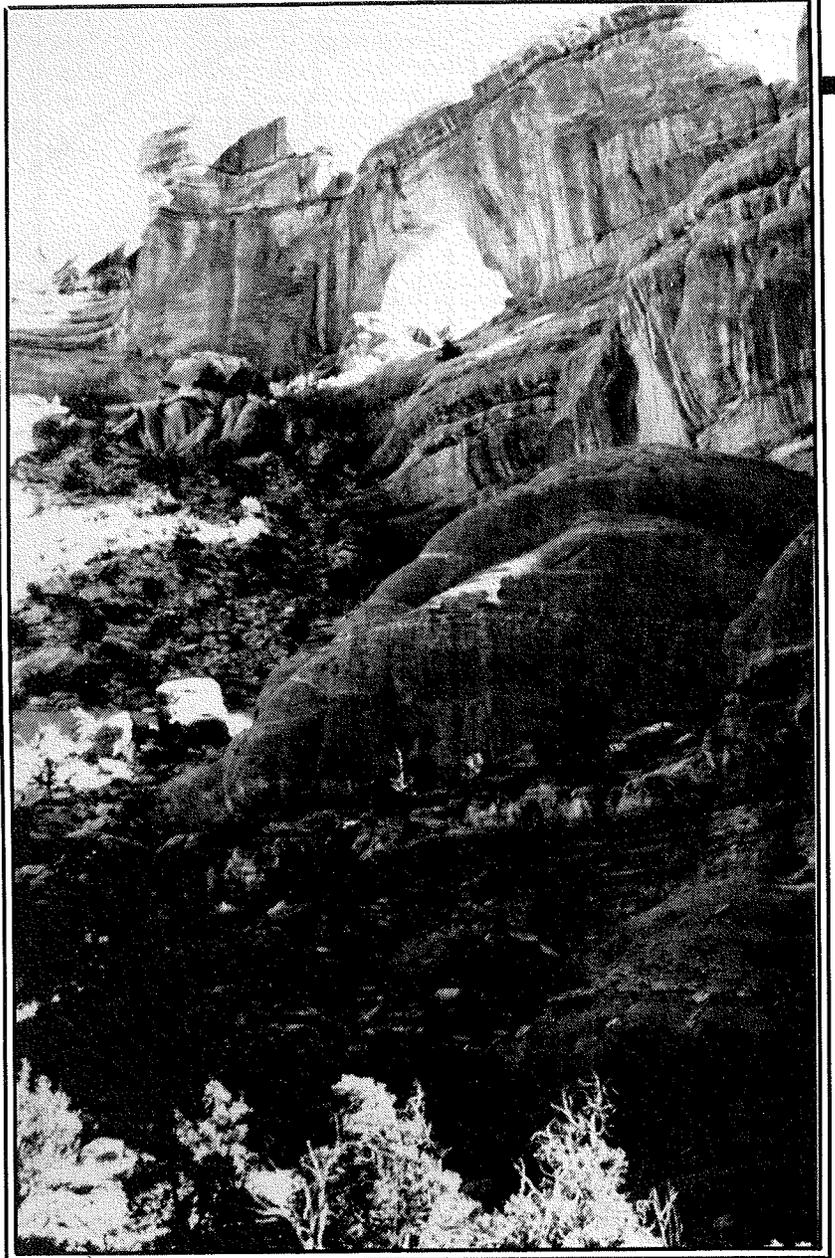
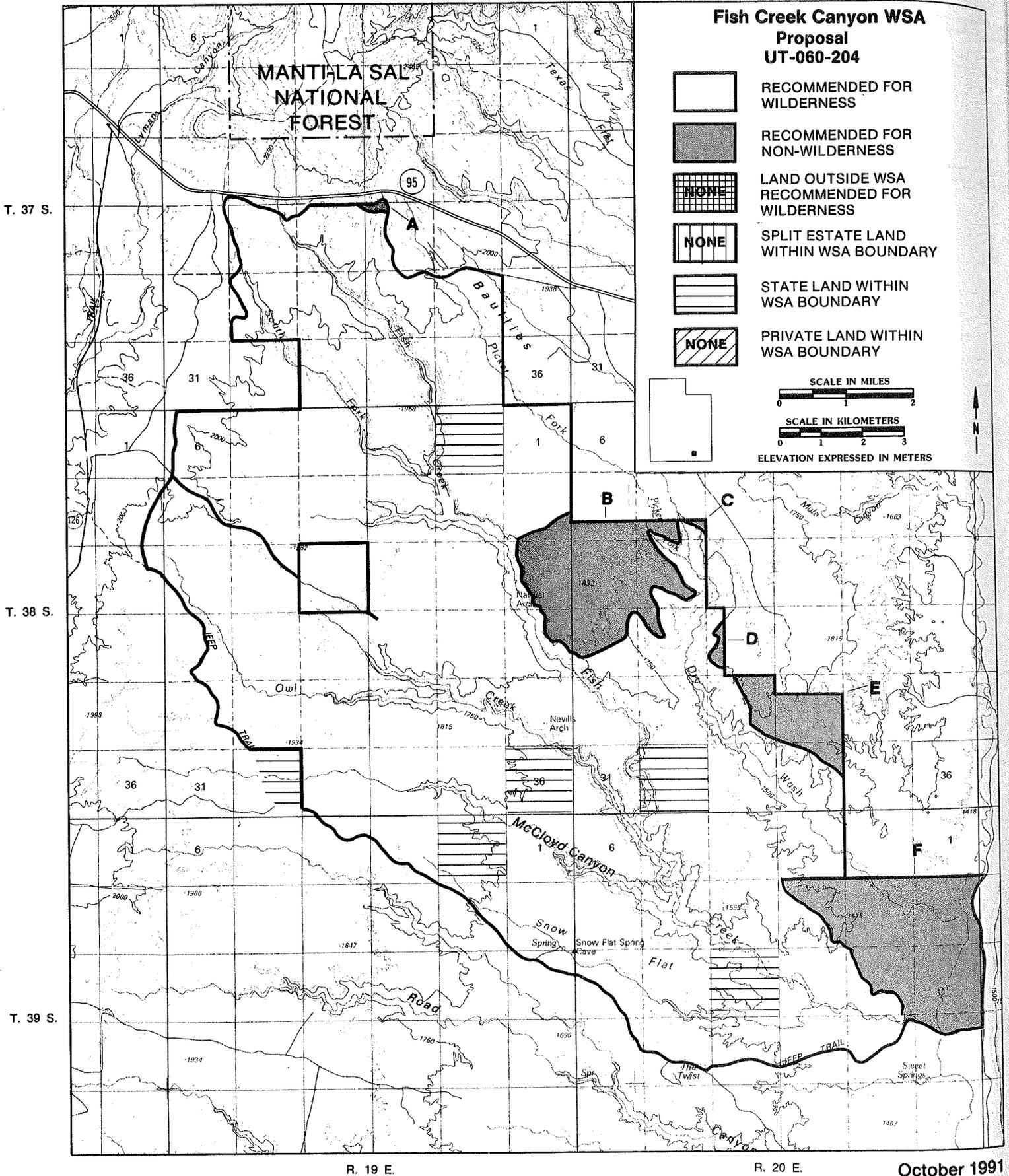


Fish Creek
Canyon WSA



FISH CREEK CANYON WSA



FISH CREEK CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA: 46,440 acres

The Fish Creek Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (UT-060-204) is in San Juan County, about 12 miles southwest of Blanding, Utah (population 3,118). The longest dimension of the study area, 17 miles, extends from the northwest to the southeast; the width varies from 3 to 7 miles, east to west. The WSA is bounded by an old State Highway 95 right-of-way on the north; section lines and a road on the east; the historic Hole-in-the-Rock Trail on the south; and a road, a State section, and a chaining on the west (see Map).

A road and a State section have been cherry-stemmed out of the western portion of the unit. The WSA is separated to the southwest by the Hole-in-the-Rock Trail from the Road Canyon WSA (UT-060-201). The WSA contains 46,440 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Five State sections (3,210 acres) are in the WSA and are in the portion of the WSA that is recommended for wilderness designation (see Table 1). The WSA is in the Canyonlands Section of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Province and is on Cedar Mesa.

**TABLE 1
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA^a**

WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	46,440
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	3,210
Total	49,650
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	40,160
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	40,160
In-holdings (State, private)	3,210
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	6,280
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0

Source: BLM File Data

^a The appendix is a detailed table of in-holdings included within the portion of the WSA recommended for designation.

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The four main canyons of the WSA are up to 700 feet deep. They trend generally south-southeast through the mesa, which is covered in most places with dense pinyon-juniper woodland and interspersed sagebrush flats, with some dry washes and bare rock surfaces. The canyons meander somewhat, and contain numerous rock fins, alcoves, pinnacles, step-like pouroffs on the canyon floors, and impressive natural arches. The canyons widen and become shallower at the southern end of the WSA, and cottonwoods grow on the canyon bottoms. Five miles of perennial streams, all of which are in the portion recommended for wilderness designation, flow in the WSA. Elevations in the WSA range from 5,300 feet at the southeastern edge of the WSA to 6,800 feet on the north. In addition to pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush, which together occupy two-thirds of the WSA, desert shrubs are common. Ponderosa pine is found in the drainages of the northern part of the WSA. The climate is arid, with cold winters and hot summers.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finalized in November 1990. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a partial wilderness alternative where 40,160 acres would be designated as wilderness and 6,280 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness, which is the recommendation in this report; a no wilderness (no action) alternative; and an all wilderness alternative.

Subsequent to publication of the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Final EIS, the Utah State Director approved the San Juan Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP). The plan includes all of the Fish Creek Canyon WSA within the Cedar Mesa Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect cultural resources, scenic values, and natural values associated with primitive recreation. Approximately 400 acres in the northwest corner of the WSA is also included in a Scenic Highway Corridor ACEC to protect scenic quality. Special management requirements for approximately 20 percent of the WSA within the Cedar Mesa ACEC, which is classified as "primitive" under the Recreation Opportunity

Spectrum classification system (ROS-P Class), where consistent with valid existing rights, include: closure to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; stipulation to prevent surface occupancy on oil and gas leases (Category 3); requirement for an approved plan of operations with special conditions to limit surface use for mining related activity; exclusion from private and commercial use of woodland products, except for limited on-site collection of dead wood for campfires; closure to disposal of mineral materials; exclusion from surface disturbance by mechanized and motorized vehicles; management to limit recreation use if cultural resources are being damaged; exclusion from new land treatments; management to meet Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I objectives.

Management prescriptions for the Scenic Highway Corridor ACEC take precedence over those for the Cedar Mesa ACEC where the ACECs overlap. The special management requirements for approximately 400 acres within the Scenic Highway ACEC, where consistent with valid existing rights, include: stipulations to prevent surface occupancy on oil and gas leases (Category 3); requirement for an approved plan of operations with special conditions to limit surface use required for mining related activity; disposal of mineral materials subject to visual quality considerations; private and commercial use of woodland products in designated areas only, except on-site collection of dead wood for campfires; limitation of OHV use to existing roads and trails; management to limit recreation use if scenic values are being damaged; management to meet VRM Class I objectives.

Special management requirements for the remaining 80 percent of the WSA within the Cedar Mesa ACEC, where consistent with valid existing rights, include: mineral leasing, geophysical work and disposal of mineral materials with special conditions to protect cultural and scenic resources and primitive recreation opportunities (Category 2); limitation of OHV use to designated roads and trails; private and commercial use of woodland products only in designated areas, except that on-site collection of

FISH CREEK CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

dead wood for campfires would be allowed throughout the area.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE:

- 40,160 acres
(recommended for wilderness)
- 6,280 acres
(not recommended for wilderness)

The recommendation for this WSA is to designate a portion of the area, 40,160 acres, as wilderness and to release the remaining 6,280 acres for uses other than wilderness. Designation of the entire area is considered to be the environmentally preferable alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The alternative selected, however, would be implemented in a manner which would utilize all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The recommendation will further apply to any additional in-holding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. The Appendix lists all in-holdings and provides additional information on acquisition.

All of the portion of the WSA that is recommended for wilderness designation is in a natural condition and has outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Wilderness values, including outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in combination with special features are within a manageable boundary in the area recommended for designation.

All of the area recommended for wilderness designation and all of the non-recommended area are in the Cedar Mesa ACEC where the restrictions on OHV use, mineral and energy exploration and development, mineral material disposal, harvest of woodland products, and surface disturbance by mechanized and motorized equipment, would continue to be administratively applied if the area is released from wilderness consideration and protection of wilderness characteristics is not a management objective. Approximately 380 acres of the recommended area and approximately 20 acres of the nonrecommended area are in the Scenic Highway Corridor ACEC where the restrictions on OHV use, mineral and energy exploration, visual impacts, and woodland harvest would continue to be

administratively applied if protection of wilderness characteristics is not a management objective.

The rationale for excluding 6,280 acres in the WSA from the recommendation for wilderness designation is detailed below (see Map).

Area A, between Highway 95 and the rim of the canyon, is the proposed site for construction of a visitor center. The visitor center would help protect the entire Cedar Mesa area including the Fish Creek Canyon WSA by providing a central facility to inform and educate the public about the special resource values of this area. In Area B, a number of vehicle routes extend across sagebrush flats to the rim of the canyon. The recommended boundary follows a vehicle way and brush fence running southwest to the east rim of Fish Creek Canyon then follows the canyon rim southeast for about 2 miles to a way heading northeast for about 1 mile. From this point, the boundary follows the rim of Dry Wash Canyon. Areas C, D, and E were excluded to form a logical topographic boundary along the rim of Dry Wash Canyon. Area F was excluded from the area recommended for designation because the County Class B road in Comb Wash, vehicle ways, a boundary road, abandoned drill holes, and openness of the area all of which detract from the feeling of remoteness and solitude in this portion of the WSA. No conflicts exist with mineral-related or other land uses.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Naturalness is defined as an attribute in which the evidence of man is substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor and where minor imprints of man exhibit no cumulative impact that is substantially noticeable. Sheer sandstone cliffs, pinnacles, knobs, two natural arches, and an abundance of cliff dwellings contribute to the naturalness of the WSA. Imprints of human activity affect less than 1 percent of the WSA. The 46,440 acres meet the naturalness

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standards for areas under wilderness review.

The major imprints surrounding Fish Creek WSA were eliminated by boundary adjustments during the BLM Intensive Wilderness Inventory. What remains are 19.8 miles of way, a few livestock developments, four abandoned drill holes, and approximately 2.2 miles of access to a drill hole that has been reclaimed under BLM's Interim Management Policy (IMP) constraints.

From the northeastern side of the WSA a way resulting from vehicle passage extends 5.9 miles south along a narrow mesa top and ends near the mesa point between Fish Creek and Dry Wash Canyons. Three spur ways fork westward from the way. One follows the WSA boundary for about 1.5 miles. It is revegetated with grasses and encroaching bushes. Another way extends west for 0.8 mile and disappears on a sage flat. Vehicle passage created a third way west for 1.0 mile to the rim of Fish Creek Canyon. All three ways cross sage flats and slickrock and weave among the pinyon-juniper.

An access way and drill pad were built in December 1981 from the Comb Wash road. Part of an existing way was accessed by a newly constructed route 2.2 miles long. The newly constructed route and drill pad were reclaimed in 1982.

From the Comb Wash road, another way extends into the unit for 3.1 miles to an abandoned drill hole. This way was originally constructed, but now it is severely washed out where it crosses Fish Creek, and erosion of the road bed is occurring in a few places. Beyond the drill pad, vehicle tracks occur around a small knoll for approximately a 0.5 mile.

An old way extends up Fish Creek Wash for approximately 4 miles. It has become overgrown, washed out, and difficult to find where it crosses the creek bed.

In January 1984, a nonimpairing seismic exploration was conducted in the WSA. The operation consisted of helicopter location of portable drilling rigs to about 20 sites. Holes 10 feet deep were drilled and all cuttings were returned

to the drill holes. Less than 1 acre was disturbed and all 20 sites were completely rehabilitated in July 1984.

From the cherry-stemmed road to Snow Flat Spring Cave, a way continues for 1.4 miles to the rim of McCloyd Canyon (a tributary of Owl Creek Canyon). Vehicles have created this way across sage flats and among pinyon-juniper trees. Also from the Snow Flat Road, a way crosses sage flats in State Section 2, ending at the rim of McCloyd Canyon for a total of 1.1 miles. This way also was created by the passage of vehicles and winds among pinyon and juniper trees and sage flats.

Vehicle tracks on the cryptogamic soils approximately 0.3 mile among moderately dense pinyon-juniper woodland enter the unit from State Section 32 on the unit's southwest. These tracks follow the north rim of a shallow canyon.

A raiing and reseeding project (the East Slickhorn Reseeding) was completed in 1955 on the unit's northeast boundary. On 1,462 acres, the sagebrush was railed and the area seeded with crested wheatgrass. About 35 acres of these projects are within the WSA. There are large grassy fields along the Dry Wash Road (outside the unit) but in the portion inside the unit, thick 3-foot tall sage is predominant; therefore, the project is thus not apparent within the WSA.

An old and deteriorated corral, possibly with historical value, is in a sage flat in T. 38 S., R. 19 E., Sec. 12. It is built with upright pinyon or juniper poles. The overall influence on the WSA's naturalness is negligible.

An archaeological site that has been fenced and stabilized is on the rim of Dry Wash Canyon on or just inside the WSA boundary. Referred to as Comb Wash Overlook, these are well preserved ruins with a dramatic view of the junction of Dry and Comb Washes.

Three stock reservoirs in the southeastern part of the WSA are not a substantial intrusion. Four abandoned and reclaimed drill holes are also in the southeastern portion of the WSA.

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At Snow Flat Spring Cave there are two natural springs. One, inside a cave, has had two wooden troughs placed under the dripping water. A metal sign bearing the words Snow Flat Spring Cave has been placed here, just west of the springs.

A 25-foot wide seismic line runs straight north from the cherry-stemmed road to the drill hole in the western portion of the WSA. It is an imprint within the WSA for a 0.5 mile and is substantially noticeable. A minor boundary adjustment could be made to remove this imprint from the WSA.

B. Solitude

More than 96 percent (44,940 acres) of the WSA and all of the area recommended for designation has outstanding opportunities for solitude. In the southeast portion of the WSA 1,500 acres do not meet the Wilderness Act criteria.

The canyons provide miles of opportunities for users to experience solitude. The meanders of the canyons and 700-foot cliffs effectively block lines of sight and muffle sounds for substantial distances.

Thick pinyon-juniper woodland effectively screens visitors. From high points, a sea of pinyon-juniper cut by abrupt canyons can be seen.

The cultivated fields on Brushy Flat, to the south, can be seen and, to the north, road cuts of the new State Highway 95 are barely visible. For approximately 1 mile south of State Highway 95, sights and sounds of traffic affect the sense of solitude, but users in gulches or canyons can avoid these disturbances.

In the extreme southeast portion of the WSA, the area west of the Class B county road down Comb Wash is relatively open, covered mainly by greasewood. In this open area of 1,500 acres the county road, a barbed wire fence, a corral, and the WSA's southern boundary road reduce the feeling of remoteness and seclusion, creating less than outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Off-site intrusions and influences are essentially nonexistent within the canyons. A major commercial airline flight

path crosses over the Grand Gulch Plateau. However, with such a lack of human influences, the occasional high altitude airliner reminds a person of the outside world.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

All 46,440 acres in the WSA meet the outstanding recreation opportunities criterion for areas under wilderness review.

Fish and Owl Creek Canyons are well known for their primitive recreation opportunities.

The BLM rangers at Grand Gulch sometimes direct visitors to these canyons to experience a less-used, unique canyon system. A convenient loop hike is possible from the heads of the canyons to the junction and return. A trail register is currently in use at the end of the cherry-stemmed access road. State Highway 95 on the north and Snow Flat road on the south also provide convenient access.

Fish, Owl, and McCloyd's Canyons have intermittent running water throughout the drainages and 5 miles of perennial stream, which makes them very attractive during the warmer months.

Hiking and camping are the main recreational activities in these canyons. The upper forks of Fish and Owl Creek Canyons challenge the hiker with rugged terrain, while steep canyon walls provide rock scrambling opportunities for those entering or leaving the deep and narrow canyons.

In addition to outstanding hiking and camping opportunities, the striking scenery provides opportunities for sightseeing and photography.

D. Special Features

Approximately 60 percent (28,000 acres) of the WSA is rated as outstanding for scenic quality.

Fish Creek WSA includes land extensively occupied by the Anasazi from about 200 A.D. to 1300 A.D.

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The unit contains a wealth of pristine cultural resources. Not only are these of scientific interest, but they are scenic and make interesting discoveries for the recreationist. An archaeological site on the unit's northeast border has been stabilized and surrounded by a chainlink fence. This site, called Comb Wash Overlook, has four tower bases and a wall on the mesa rim and rock shelter dwellings below.

The well-preserved ruins, with a dramatic view of Dry and Comb Wash junctions, enhance a visitor's feeling of the history and the timelessness of the land. The Hole-in-the-Rock Trail, the route followed by the Mormon settlers in 1879 to 1880, forms most of this unit's southern boundary.

The pioneers camped at Snow Flat Spring Cave and built The Twist, a narrow twisting road through the rocks from the mesa down to the Comb Wash area.

In 1908, as part of a survey of Natural Bridges National Monument, W.B. Douglass of the General Land Office surveyed and described the Snow Flat Spring Cave. He considered the spring to be important to the National Monument because it ". . . supplied the only available water at a necessary intermediate stopping point and was, therefore, essential to public travel."

Bald eagles and peregrine falcons, both endangered species, may be sighted in the WSA. Cougar, a species associated with wilderness, inhabit the WSA.

Seven other animal species and four plant species that are considered sensitive may occur in the WSA. Refer to Appendix 4 and the Affected Environment, Vegetation and Wildlife Including Special Status Species sections of the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Final EIS for additional information.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

A. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a potential natural vegetation (PNV) ecosystem not presently represented in the NWPS.

PNV is the vegetative type that would eventually become climax vegetation if not altered by human interference, and is not necessarily the vegetation that is currently present in an area.

The WSA is in the Colorado Plateau Province/Ecoregion. The PNV in the WSA is blackbrush (14,559 acres) and juniper-pinyon woodland (31,881 acres).

Blackbrush PNV is currently not represented at all in the NWPS. Juniper-pinyon woodland PNV is well represented in the NWPS nationally and in Utah and in other BLM study areas both in and outside of Utah. This information is summarized in Table 2 from data compiled in December 1989.

TABLE 2
ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTATION

BAILEY-KUCHLER CLASSIFICATION (PNV)	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
NATIONWIDE (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Blackbrush	0	0	11	215,505
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	11	1,401,745	84	2,112,124
UTAH (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Blackbrush	0	0	11	215,505
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	26,000	53	1,674,317

Source: BLM File Data.

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B. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Days Driving Time (5 Hours) of Major Population Centers

The WSA is not within a 5-hour drive of any major population centers.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Fish Creek Canyon WSA would not contribute significantly to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas within the NWPS. As of January 1987, the NWPS included 93 areas comprising 5,475,207 acres in Utah and in Arizona and Colorado, the adjacent states nearest the WSA.

A Fish Creek Canyon Wilderness would supplement the NWPS in the Canyonlands Section of the Colorado Plateau, however, where there are just two established wilderness areas, totaling 70,751 acres. There are four designated wilderness areas within 100 miles of the WSA. To the north is the 45,000-acre Dark Canyon Wilderness (U.S. Forest Service [FS]), to the east is the 8,100-acre Mesa Verde Wilderness (National Park Service [NPS]), to the southwest is the 112,400-acre Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (BLM) and to the northwest is the 25,751-acre Box-Death Hollow Wilderness (FS).

Manageability (The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.)

The portion of the WSA that is recommended for wilderness designation can be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. BLM projects no surface disturbance following designation of the area recommended under the Partial Wilderness Alternative.

One post-FLPMA oil and gas lease covering 40 acres and one pending oil and gas lease covering 160 acres are in the recommended area. The existing lease is subject to stipulations for the protection of wilderness values. Therefore, exploration and development is not anticipated. There are no mining claims in the recommended area. Development of locatable minerals is not anticipated

within the area recommended for designation.

Domestic livestock grazing would continue to occur as currently authorized in the area. Existing range projects could be maintained without impairing the wilderness values of the area.

Six miles of way in the southeast portion of the WSA not recommended for designation would remain open to vehicular travel, as well as the roads bordering the WSA. About 3 miles of road, cherry-stemmed on the west side of the WSA, would remain open to vehicles. Unauthorized ORV use will be an administrative problem along existing roads and ways in the area recommended for designation.

There are five State sections (3,210 acres) in the portion of the WSA recommended for designation and six State sections adjacent to the area. Major developments on these sections and related access and activity would reduce the overall quality of wilderness values in the area recommended for designation; however, the potential for development is low.

The area not recommended for designation also could be managed as wilderness, although it would be more difficult to do so. Much of the area not recommended for designation would be administratively difficult to protect from vehicle use due to the number of existing roads and ways. Outside influences, such as sights and sounds from roads, will detract somewhat from wilderness values, including outstanding opportunities for solitude in the portion of the WSA not recommended for wilderness.

These leases are subject to the wilderness protection stipulation and would likely expire and not be renewed if the area were designated wilderness. There are no mining claims in this area and locatable mineral development is not projected.

Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) prepared a mineral assessment report for the Fish Creek WSA (USGS Bulletin 1755-B, Dana J.

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Bove, et al., 1989). The report indicated that no mineral resources were identified during field examination in the WSA except for common-variety sand and gravel and there is no history of mineral production.

The potential for undiscovered oil and gas is moderate. The potential for undiscovered coal, geothermal resources, and metals, including uranium and thorium, is low. Sandstone and sand and gravel have no unique qualities, but could have limited local use for road surfaces or other construction purposes. Similar materials are abundant outside the WSA and closer to markets, however.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table (Table 3) summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the area as wilderness.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Future local expenditures could increase up to \$240,800 from increases in primitive and motorized recreational use. Up to \$92,190 in annual oil and gas lease fees and livestock sales and fees would be foregone. This would not be significant on a regional basis.

Summary of WSA-Specific Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Comments received during the early stages of the EIS preparation were used to develop significant study issues and alternatives for the ultimate management of the WSA.

During formal public review of the Draft EIS, a total of 161 inputs specifically addressing this WSA were received from 577 commenters, including oral statements received at 17 public hearings on the EIS. Each letter or oral testimony was considered to be one input. Duplicate letters or testimony by the same commenter were not counted as additional inputs or signatures. Each individual was credited with one signature or testimony regardless of the number of inputs.

In general, 377 commenters supported wilderness designation for part or all of the WSA, while 193 commenters were opposed. Seven commenters addressed the relative merits of the EIS but took no formal position on wilderness designation.

Those favoring wilderness commented that wilderness designation would protect the values in the WSA from development and preserve them for future generations and would add diversity to the NWPS. The majority of those commenting were from other states.

Those opposing wilderness were concerned that wilderness designation would preclude mineral exploration and development, prohibit wood gathering, harm local and State economies, restrict public access, and would not be compatible with multiple use as it would conflict with nonwilderness uses. Most of those opposing wilderness designation were from rural Utah.

One Federal agency, the USBM, commented on the Draft EIS. The USBM expressed no opinion on wilderness designation but stated that the petroleum potential for the WSA may be higher than shown in the Draft EIS.

No comment letters were received on the Final EIS.

There are five State sections (3,210 acres) in the WSA. In commenting on the Draft EIS, the State of Utah expressed general opposition to wilderness designation but did not take a definite position regarding wilderness designation of the WSA. The State commented that Fish Creek Canyon had high wilderness values and moderate conflicts. Conflicts identified included the planned vegetation treatment and seeding for livestock and wildlife management and the potential development of underground water. The State commented that an administrative designation to facilitate special management of cultural values is preferable to wilderness designation.

The Fish Creek Canyon WSA is in San Juan County. The San Juan County Master Plan emphasizes multiple use of public lands and zones the WSA as open range and forest land. The San Juan County Commission

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is opposed to wilderness designation for the Fish Creek Canyon WSA and has endorsed the Consolidated Local Government Response to Wilderness that opposes wilderness designation of BLM lands in Utah. In commenting on the Draft EIS the Commission noted that designation of the WSA as wilderness would be in conflict with the County Master Plan and that the area is penetrated by too many roads to classify it as roadless. The Commission believes that BLM has underestimated the mineral potential of the WSA. The Commission also pointed out that State inholdings would conflict with wilderness management and that the WSA is geologically and ecologically identical to other areas already protected in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, National Parks, National Monuments and FS wilderness within the Colorado Plateau and in San Juan County.

FISH CREEK WSA

Table 3
Comparative Summary of Impacts By Alternative^a

Issue Topic	Alternatives		All Wilderness (46,440 Acres)
	Recommendation Partial Wilderness (40,160 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Wilderness values would be preserved in the designated area which is approximately 87 percent of the WSA. Vehicular use on designated ways and trails in the nondesignated portion would continue to occasionally detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the WSA.	Wilderness values would not be protected by wilderness management and loss would occur as intrusions increase. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be directly lost on about 2,120 acres of the WSA, and indirectly reduced in quality on up to an additional 4,644 acres. The loss would be due to oil and gas exploration and vegetation treatments. Special features would not be significantly affected. Vehicular use on designated ways and trails and new energy exploration roads would continue to detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the WSA.	Wilderness designation would preserve the wilderness values in the WSA.
Impacts on Vegetation	Vegetation types and threatened, endangered, or other special status species would be preserved on 87 percent of the WSA and would not be significantly affected in the nondesignated area because no surface disturbance is projected.	Up to 7.5 percent of the pinyon-juniper woodland type within the WSA would be converted to grasses. There would be no significant impact to populations of threatened, endangered, or other special status plant species because they generally do not grow where the disturbance would occur and mitigation would be required.	Vegetation, including threatened, endangered, and other special status species would be preserved with this alternative because there would be no additional surface disturbance and no OHV use in the WSA.

FISH CREEK WSA

Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative

		Alternatives	
	Recommendation Partial Wilderness (40,160 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	All Wilderness (46,440 Acres)
Issue Topic			
Impacts on Mineral and Energy Exploration and Production	<p>The potential for oil and gas exploration would be foregone in the designated area. Restrictions on the nondesignated area would not change from those now in effect. There would not be a significant loss in production of any mineral or energy resource because there would be a low probability of wilderness development even without wilderness designation.</p>	<p>Implementation of this alternative would not further restrict or affect mineral and energy resource exploration and production beyond those already in effect because mineral leasing, location of mining claims, and mineral developments could occur without restrictions for protection of wilderness values. Approximately 80 percent of the WSA would be open to oil and gas exploration and development with special conditions to protect cultural and scenic resources and primitive recreation opportunities (Category 2). Approximately 20 percent of the WSA would be open to oil and gas exploration and development with stipulations to prevent surface occupancy (Category 3). The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry and development with special conditions for surface use.</p>	<p>The potential for oil and gas exploration would be foregone. There would not be a significant loss in production of any mineral or energy resource because there would be a low probability of mineral development even without wilderness designation.</p>

FISH CREEK WSA

Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	Alternatives	
	Recommendation Partial Wilderness (40,160 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness All Wilderness (46,440 Acres)
Impacts on Wildlife Habitat and Population	<p>Partial wilderness designation would protect wildlife habitat from disturbance and maintain present wildlife populations including special status species through the preservation of naturalness and solitude on 87 percent of the WSA. Opportunities to provide vegetation diversity and additional forage that would benefit big game and certain nongame species would be precluded because the proposed vegetation treatment would be in the designated area and would not be allowed.</p>	<p>Wilderness designation would protect wildlife habitat from disturbance and maintain present wildlife populations through preservation of naturalness and solitude. Opportunities to provide vegetation diversity and additional forage that would benefit big game and certain nongame species would be precluded. Special status species would receive additional protection.</p>
Impacts on Livestock Management	<p>Impacts would be about the same as with the All Wilderness Alternative because 87 percent of the WSA would be designated wilderness, access to 13.8 miles of ways would be restricted and the 2,100-acre vegetation treatment would not be allowed.</p>	<p>The opportunity to increase livestock forage by 500 AUMs through vegetation treatment on 2,100 acres would be foregone. Restrictions on vehicle access on 19.8 miles of way would necessitate changes in livestock management and cause inconvenience and slight increases in costs to 15 livestock permittees.</p>

FISH CREEK WSA

**Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative**

Alternatives	
Recommendation Partial Wilderness (40,160 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness (46,440 Acres)
<p>Issue Topic</p> <p>Impacts on Cultural Resources</p>	<p>The benefits of protection of cultural resources including 61 known sites from most surface disturbance and all vehicular access would probably outweigh potential negative effects from increased vandalism due to increased future recreational use. Management of cultural resources may be restricted in scope and execution due to wilderness designation.</p>
<p>Cultural resources including 51 recorded sites would receive protection from wilderness designation on 87 percent of the WSA under this alternative. Sites in the nondesignated portion would continue to receive protection under existing laws and under the management prescriptions which limit surface disturbance in the Cedar Mesa ACEC.</p>	<p>Measures that limit surface disturbance would reduce direct and indirect impacts to cultural resources. Minor impact to cultural resources is expected due to oil and gas exploration. Cultural properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would be surrounded by an avoidance area sufficient to allow permanent protection. Vehicle access may cause intentional or unintentional damage to archaeological sites in portions of the WSA. Cultural resources would be managed for information potential, public values, and conservation. Cultural resource management would continue without regard to wilderness management.</p>
<p>Impacts on Recreation</p>	<p>Opportunities for OHV use would be eliminated but opportunities for primitive recreation experience use would be preserved and enhanced. Loss of OHV opportunities would not be significant on a regional basis because there are adequate alternative areas available for OHV use. Primitive-type recreational use would continue to increase. Opportunities for commercial outfitting for primitive recreation would be enhanced.</p>
<p>Opportunities for OHV use would be eliminated on 87 percent of the WSA while opportunities for primitive recreation use would be preserved. Loss of OHV opportunities would not be significant on a regional basis because there are adequate alternative areas available for OHV use. Primitive-type recreational use including opportunities for commercial outfitting would continue to increase.</p>	<p>Approximately 20 percent of the WSA would be closed to OHV use. Opportunities for OHV use would be maintained on designated ways and trails in approximately 80 percent of the WSA. The quality of opportunities for primitive recreation would be reduced on up to 80 percent of the WSA. Vehicular use on designated ways and trails as well as primitive use would continue to increase.</p>

FISH CREEK WSA

**Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternative**

Issue Topic	Alternatives	
	Recommendation Partial Wilderness (40,160 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness All Wilderness (46,440 Acres)
Impacts on Economic Conditions	<p>Future local expenditures could increase up to \$240,800 from increases in primitive and motorized recreational use. Up to \$92,190 in annual oil and gas lease fees and livestock sales and fees would be foregone.</p>	<p>Present economic trends would not be affected because major mineral or other developments are not projected to occur in the WSA in the foreseeable future. Recreation-related expenditures could contribute up to \$244,800 to the local economy by the year 2020. An additional 500 AUMs from vegetation manipulation would contribute up to \$10,000 annually in local livestock sales and \$770 annually in grazing fees. Present and future oil and gas leases could contribute up to \$90,640 annually in Federal lease revenues.</p> <p>Future local recreation-related expenditures could increase up to \$240,800 with an increase in primitive recreation use. Up to \$101,410 in annual oil and gas lease fees and livestock sales and fees would be foregone.</p>

^a The BLM San Juan RMP was approved following publication of the BLM Utah Statewide Wilderness EIS. The analysis of impacts summarized here has been modified to reflect the more restrictive management practices established by the RMP.

FISH CREEK CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Appendix
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Non-Federal Holdings Within Areas Recommended for Designation ^a

Legal Description (Prior to any Subdivision)	Total Acreage	Number of Owners (If Parcel has been subdivided)	Type of Ownership by Estate (Federal, State, Private, Other) (Surface Estate) (Subsurface Estate)	Presently Proposed for Acquisition (Yes, No)	Preferred Method of Acquisition (Purchase, Exchange, Other)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition (Land Costs)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition (Processing Costs)
T. 38 S., R. 19 E., Sec. 2	651.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 38 S., R. 19 E., Sec. 36	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 38 S., R. 20 E., Sec. 32	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 39 S., R. 19 E., Sec. 2	639.40		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 39 S., R. 20 E., Sec. 16	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000

^a The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a Federal appraised value of the land or mineral estate, but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring non-Federal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.