

Vernal Field Office

The following WSAs are managed by the Salt Lake Field Office:

- Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Instant Study Area
- Bull Canyon
- Daniels Canyon
- Diamond Breaks
- Flume Canyon (Management shared with Moab.)
- West Cold Springs
- Winter Ridge

Note: Acreage was taken from the Utah State Wilderness Report.

Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Instant Study Area

Size: 400 acres

Location: 75 miles south of Vernal, UT and 50 miles northwest of Grand Junction, CO.

Vegetation: General vegetation includes sagebrush and squaw apple with small thickets of Gamble Oak, serviceberry, and Mountain mahogany.

General Description: The topography is a gentle rolling ridge top which gradually slopes downhill to the northeast.

Special Features: No special features are described in the Utah Statewide Wilderness Report.

Bull Canyon

Size: 12,297 acres

Location: Uintah County, UT and Moffat County, CO approximately 4 miles north of Dinosaur, CO.

Vegetation: The vegetation includes semi-arid species such as sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities, with riparian zones along the drainages.

General Description: The majority of Bull Canyon is located in Colorado. There are 599 acres of the WSA in Utah. Geographically the area is cut by deep ridges and canyons of sandstone eroded by rain and snowmelt waters. Colorful cliffs, a maze of canyons, and unique rock formations are a result of deep erosion.

Special Features:

- The Dominguez/Escalante Expedition of 1776 reportedly camped within the west central portion of the WSA. The history of the encampment is well documented and recounts that the expedition drew water from a flowing well and hunted buffalo there.
- Many visitors frequent the Plug Hat Picnic Area and Escalante Overlook which is adjacent to this area so they can enjoy the breathtaking vista into and over the WSA.
- The University of Arizona has studied relict pinyon pine in the area to establish dendrochronological data on climate extending more than 600 years into the past.
- A portion of the WSA is identified as crucial habitat (summer range) for elk.
- Significant paleontological resources have been found in the vicinity of the WSA and are likely to occur there.

Daniels Canyon

Size: 2,496 acres

Location: Eastern Uintah County, about 22 miles east of Vernal UT.

Vegetation: Pinyon-juniper woodland, intermixed with sagebrush, predominate the WSA.

General Description: The WSA is an east-west trending canyon with vertical walls as much as 900 feet high on the south side and 1,600 feet on the north side.

Special Features:

- Outstanding views of the surrounding countryside within the WSA enhance the WSA.
- Cougar, a wildlife species associated with wilderness is found in the WSA.
- Bald eagles and peregrine falcons may occur in the WSA, along with golden eagles.

Diamond Breaks

Size: 35,380 acres

Location: Moffat County, CO and Dagget County, UT, approximately 65 miles northwest of Maybell, CO.

Vegetation: The diverse vegetative communities range from sagebrush and pinyon-juniper woodlands to aspen, mountain brush, Douglas fir, limber pine, and ponderosa pine forests.

General Description: The WSA consists of the broken, mountainous land mass known as Diamond Mountain, part of the eastern extension of the Uinta Range. A dominant feature of the area is a series of northeast-southwest trending mountain peaks with ridges, steep draws, and canyons draining north and south. This series of colorful, rugged red sand stone ridges “break” toward the Green River to the north in Browns Park.

Special Features:

- Significant cultural resources such as rock art, granaries, rock shelters, and lithic scatter sites related to prehistoric and historic occupation can be found in the WSA.
- The WSA provides an important scenic, mountainous background from the Green River, Browns Park, Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge and the northern end of Dinosaur National Monument.
- A small portion of the WSA in Utah is designated as crucial habitat (winter range) for mule deer.

Flume Canyon

Size: 50,800 acres (2,750 acres are managed by Vernal)

Location: Grand County, UT about 43 miles northeast of Green River, UT.

Vegetation: Pinyon-juniper woodland, mixed with Douglas fir, aspen, and mountain shrub.

General Description: This is a dissected landscape of steep ridges and v-shaped canyons formed by the many drainages leading north to Westwater Creek Canyon along the northern boundary, east to Sulphur Creek and Antone Wash, and south to Diamond Canyon. Flume Canyon itself runs south in the central part of the WSA. The western portion of the WSA was partially burned in a large fire that occurred in the summer of 2002. The primary recreation use of the area is hunting, but the WSA also provides opportunities for hiking, backpacking and photography.

Special Features:

- It has year round populations of mountain lion, elk and black bear.
- Rock formations and color contrasts provide scenic values.
- Erosional features of scenic interest within the WSA include pinnacles, balanced rocks, alcoves, overhangs, potholes, and arches.

West Cold Springs

Size: 17,682 acres

Location: Moffat County, CO and Dagget County, UT approximately 65 miles northwest of Maybell, CO.

Vegetation: Diverse vegetation communities cover the area consisting of sagebrush steppe and salbrush/greasewood in the lower elevations to dense pinyon-juniper woodlands which dominate the area, to large old growth mountain mahogany and oak scrub communities at higher elevations.

General Description: The WSA is primarily the western portion of the rugged, south facing slopes of Cold Spring Mountain. This area is characterized by deep draws and canyons that have been cut through the O-Wi-Yu-Kuts Plateau, forming a series of plateaus and ridges along the northern margins of the Green River Valley known as Browns Park.

Special Features:

- The area is known to possess historic and prehistoric cultural sites varying from Paleo-Indian to more modern Ute and Shoshone tribes.
- The WSA is included within the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Cold Springs Quality Elk Management Area.
- Beaver Creek is a Colorado Division of Wildlife Class II, High Priority Fishery Resource with probable occurrence of State or Federal threatened species.
- Cold Spring Mountain is a significant viewshed from Browns Park which is experiencing increased visitor use.
- Habitat for *Oenothera acutissima* (acute leaf evening primrose) occurs within the WSA.
- Marginal Nesting habitat is available for the peregrine falcon and golden eagle. Bald eagles occur in the winter.
- The WSA lies in a transition zone between the Rocky Mountain Forest Province ecoregion and the Wyoming Basin Province ecoregion.

Winter Ridge

Size: 42,462 acres

Location: In the Book Cliffs in southern Uintah County, and about 60 miles south of Vernal, UT.

Vegetation: Vegetation is predominantly pinyon juniper woodland and sagebrush/saltbrush.

General Description: The main feature in the northern part of the WSA is Main Canyon, a relatively shallow canyon that drains toward the northwest. Tributary canyons and the northern slopes of Winter Ridge comprise the southern portion of the unit.

Special Features:

- The WSA has year-round populations of cougar, elk, mule deer, and black bear which are species associated with wilderness.
- The peregrine falcon and bald eagle and six other animal species considered sensitive may occur in the WSA.