

**Manti La Sal National Forest
South Zone - Draft Wilderness Evaluation
Including San Juan County Comments**

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Milk Ranch Point

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural, non-native species are not readily apparent to users within the unit, though smooth brome, crested wheat grass, and vine weed can be found along some roads. The polygon consists mainly of Pinyon juniper with sage openings, mountain brush, and scattered stands of Ponderosa pine.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. Old plowing and chaining retreatment occurred in the early 2000 though it is not obvious or readily apparent on the landscape.

1c. Little or no evidence of human activity is noticeable on the landscape. Prevalence of improvements is scattered and does not detract from apparent naturalness. Range improvements include 5 reservoirs and 1 metal or fiberglass trough, 2 miles of barbed wire fence, and one corral that is made of wood and is visible from the South Elk Road. One motorized system trail (Trail #472) is shown on the motor vehicle use map (MVUM) within the unit, however the trail does not exist on the ground. There are some user created motorized trails. A 300 foot section of an old road leads to a small quarry site within the unit.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though some signs of civilization are visible. The polygon contains seven cherry stem roads that protrude into the polygon, but the level of use is low on the roads. The northern boundary is the South Elks Road and it receives a relatively high level of use, decreasing opportunities for solitude when near the road. There is one motorized trail, but it is not apparent on the ground and is not used. There is no range activity in the area as the allotment has been inactive since 2002. The unit is bordered on the east by BLM managed lands that are undeveloped and contain no roads or trails. In general, human activities in the area are rare, and primarily occurs as hunting during the spring and fall months.

2b. There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation including day hiking, hunting, horseback riding, and cultural resource viewing. Some of these opportunities would be considered, high quality.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. No

b. No

c. Yes, Numerous NR eligible sites with several of regional significance. Sites are part of the proposed Abajo Archaeological District.

d. No

e. No

f. No, cultural resources

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the area. Seven Cherry stem roads exist in the unit which would make management of the wilderness character more difficult, but the roads only see light use. Undeveloped BLM managed lands are adjacent to the east and south of the unit. The entire unit is within the Shash Jaa National Monument which withdrew the unit from the mining law and precludes future claims. The South Elks road forms the northern boundary of the unit and is a primary access to the area. The western boundary is formed by Forest Road #0182 which access BLM lands to the south and sees relatively light motorized use.

Rating

5a. Moderate

San Juan County Evaluation

This area is typical of the Pinyon/Juniper/Browse/Brush/Grass communities found on most of the mesa tops in San Juan County in this elevation range.

There are a few acres in the Northwest corner of this unit between the South Elks road #0092 and the Milk Ranch Point road #0182 that have an overstory of Ponderosa Pine. This area was cut over for commercial timber harvest in the 1960's.

Except for the Ponderosa Pine area mentioned in the first sentence, the western half of the unit lies on the mesa top and is comprised mostly of Pinyon/Juniper stands, interspersed with some large sage/browse/grass openings. The area was treated in the early 1960's with some plowing and chaining treatments (Note: the Forest Service states this treatment was done in 2000?). These treatments along with some fairly large wildfires and some prescribed burning between 2000 and 2003 (that were reseeded by plane) have resulted in quite a bit of plant diversity in the area.

There are some Anasazi sites scattered across the area but most are rubble mounds from Anasazi sites that have fallen down over time. There are no standing walls left on the bench area. Because of the changes in this area due to manmade improvements and wildfire it is very productive for livestock and wildlife forage. It is an area that gets quite a bit of use by deer and elk in the fall, winter and spring seasons.

At the mesa rim on the East half of the unit the terrain drops fairly steeply in the drainages of the North and South Forks of Whiskers Draw and drops down onto the Little Baullies Mesa on the South. This area is markedly different than the rest of the unit and should be in a different polygon. Just below the Mesa rim on the East there are some impressive Anasazi sites with standing walls - one of these is known as the "Three Kiva's" site.

At present this unit falls within the Babylon Allotment which is under permit to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. The allotment is currently not stocked with livestock as it has been in non-use status (application for non use by permittee) since 2003 (may have been 2002?) .

If the allotment is stocked with cattle in the future, existing stock ponds and springs found in the Milk Ranch Point - Unit 15 would need heavy equipment (dozers) to maintain the existing ponds. These ponds are essential for livestock use of this area. For years there has been a proposal to pipe the Butt Spring to this area and install numerous troughs throughout the mesa top to improve distribution of livestock over this area. Making this a wilderness area would nullify or severely limit this opportunity to graze this area or maintain the existing water improvements (5 reservoirs, one spring and trough, and 2 miles of fence) or construct the proposed pipeline as the use of motorized equipment is not allowed or is severely limited in wilderness.

Road #0182 which forms the West boundary of this Unit leads to two Anasazi Ruins known as Lewis Lodge and Hotel Rock in the Little Baullie Mesa area. These sites receive a lot of visitors. The Forest Service write-up stated that the level of use on the roads in this area is low. However, travel to these two Anasazi sites has been relatively heavy since the designation of the Bears Ears Monument.

Because of the visible range improvements that have been constructed on the mesa top of this unit, presence of non-native plant species and changes from the dominant climax species of Pinyon/Juniper, Apparent Naturalness should be rated as moderate. Solitude should be rated as

moderate as there are opportunities to feel alone and engage in primitive and unconfined recreation. However, in the event that the area is again stocked with livestock, Manageability would be low for wilderness characteristics. A key point to note here is that the Pinyon/Juniper site is very typical on the National Forest and throughout San Juan County. For these reasons the unit does not have outstanding qualities that make it attractive as a wilderness.

Arch Canyon

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appears natural within the unit. Non-native species are not evident, however some smooth brome is in the understory of much of the Ponderosa pine stands. Uplands consist of Ponderosa pine, mixed conifer and aspen in the heads of the canyons, as well as willow and cottonwood in the riparian areas. Hanging gardens occur on the canyon walls. The unit contains Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) habitat, as well as bears, turkey, elk, peregrine falcon, golden eagle territories, and Abert's squirrel.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. Vegetation treatments include commercial logging which are more than 20 years old and not noticeable to the casual visitor. Some vegetation thinning projects have occurred, but appear natural. Less than 10% of the unit is affected by prior logging activities.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity. Prevalence of improvements are scattered and does not detract from apparent naturalness. Improvements include 22 earthen stock ponds, 11 troughs, 2.25 miles of barbed wire fence, and one wooden corral that is visible from South Long Point Road. Several little used non- motorized trails are located within the unit in the canyon bottoms as well as along the rims including the West Texas Rim Trail which was constructed as an old road but is now managed as a non-motorized trails. A short section of motorized trail connects roads in the South Long Point portion of the unit.. Some old decommissioned roads are evident on the landscape but are naturally reclaiming.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are visible when on the mesa tops. From the mesa tops, small towns and houses on the Navajo Reservation are visible at night .There are three cherry stem roads and several spurs protruding into the unit on the mesa tops that affect opportunities for solitude. There is a high level of solitude in the canyons. The northern boundary of the unit is formed by the South Elks Road and the western boundary of the unit is formed by the Elk Ridge Road, they are popular

area's for dispersed camping which could detract from the sense of feeling alone. Below the rim, within the canyons there are no signs of human development and opportunities for solitude are high. The difficulty of access into the canyons increases the opportunities for solitude. Several outfitter and guides occasionally use the unit but have little impact on the opportunities for solitude.

2b. There are abundant high quality opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include excellent day hiking, backpacking, canyoneering and horse riding. There is also excellent big game (Mule Deer, Elk and Black Bear) hunting. High quality opportunities for visiting heritage sites exist in the unit. Rock climbing has been developed on some of the towers and opportunities for new routes exist. The steep and rugged terrain provides a high level of challenge and risk.

Rating

2a. High

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes, MSO habitat, bears, turkey, elk, common forest species, peregrine falcon, golden eagle territories, Abert's squirrel

b. Yes, three named arches, One of the Bears Ears is in this unit and has major cultural significance for local tribes.

c. Yes, NR eligible sites are present. Some sites, such as Lewis Lodge, are of regional significance.

d. No

e. No

f. No, maybe cultural

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and management considerations affects only isolated spots within the unit and makes management to preserve the unit's wilderness characteristics possible throughout the area. This unit is currently within the Shash Jaa National Monument which withdrew the unit from the mining law and precludes future claims. Approximately 75% of the unit is within the Arch Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) and is managed under the 2001 Roadless Rule to maintain its roadless character. A portion of the unit was also proposed for wilderness designation in the Utah Public Lands Initiative (PLI) drafted by Utah's Congressional delegation. The southern portion of the unit is adjacent to the BLM managed Mule Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

There are three cherry stem roads occurring in the unit. Several outfitter and guides operate in the unit, their activities would be consistent with managing the area for its wilderness character.

The area is within an active grazing allotment and occasional maintenance of existing permitted range improvements occurs. The canyons within the unit are highly manageable as wilderness. The mesa tops would be more challenging to manage as wilderness.

Rating
5a. High

San Juan County Evaluation

This unit has two allotments that fall within its boundary. A portion of the Babylon Allotment (Under Permit to the Ute Mountain Tribe) is in this unit and is currently not grazed as this allotment has been in a non-use status since 2003 (possibly 2002?). About 50% percent of the Bears Ears Grazing Allotment lies in this unit.

The mesa top area of this unit has a significant amount of Ponderosa Pine overstory and has been logged commercially. Roads both open and closed are apparent in the area which distracts from Apparent Naturalness. The Forest Service estimates that less than 10% of the area has been affected by logging practices. This may be a very conservative estimate.

There are numerous water developments in this unit including 11 springs and troughs, 22 earthen ponds as well as 2.25 miles of fence located above and below the rim in the Upper and Lower Rogers grazing areas on the benches above Texas Canyon and below the rims along the east side of South Long Point. There is a livestock corral along road #0184 on South Long Point about halfway out the point. In order to maintain grazing within these areas heavy equipment (including dozers and track or backhoes) and lighter mechanical equipment such as chainsaws would be needed to maintain these developments. Wilderness designation, which would preclude or severely limit the use of motorized equipment, would preclude or severely limit this work and would reduce the grazing capacity of the allotment.

The Forest Service failed to mention two livestock driveway trails in this unit. One allows access for the Twin Spring Allotment permittee to and from the National Forest summer range to their fall, winter, and spring range on the BLM Public Lands. It enters into Arch Canyon Unit at the intersection of Forest Road #'s 0088 and 5486 right between the Bears Ears and follows Road #0088 South for one and one half miles to it's junction with Forest Trail #473, it then follows this trail off the mesa rim onto the BLM and crosses under Highway 95 in the Grand Gulch drainage. This trail was built with a dozer; the other trail allows access for the Bears Ears Allotment permittee to and from the National Forest summer range to their fall, winter and spring range on the BLM Public Lands. This trail starts at the South end of South Long Point near the junction of Forest Road #'s 0184 and 5396 and ties into Forest Trail #474 and drops off the mesa rim down to Lyman Canyon and crosses the road just East of the junction for Utah Highways #'s 95 and 261 near Hell's Half Acre. Trail #474 was also made by a dozer.

The Forest Service states there is little evidence of human activity, and has given a High rating for Naturalness. However, evidence of human activity is readily apparent on the mesa including evidence of commercial logging, livestock activities and developed range improvements, and cowboy and livestock activity on the trails and roads. Road #0088 is the main access road from Utah 95 to the Bears Ears area. Traffic along this route has increased significantly since President Obama declared the Monument in 2016. There is quite a bit of dispersed camping in this area during the summer and especially during the hunting seasons. Apparent Naturalness, Solitude and Manageability should be rated moderate at best for the mesa top.

Texas, Arch, and Butts Canyons are the only parts of this unit that have wilderness characteristics and as such should be broken out into a separate polygon. These areas have higher values for Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability and would have the highest priority on the the Monticello District to be designated as Wilderness.

The Forest Service described non-motorized trails that are lightly used in the area. In those areas below the east rim of South Long Point and in the Upper and Lower Rogers Flats above the canyon rim of Texas and Arch Canyons there are numerous livestock trails in these areas that are heavily used by cattle and cowboys horseback managing the allotment. These trails are routinely cleared by the use of chainsaws. Wilderness designation would eliminate chainsaw use.

Arch Canyon and the upper section of Texas and Butts Canyons are accessed by the Arch Canyon Road that comes from Comb Wash up Arch Canyon on BLM lands. This road basically ends at the Forest Boundary providing jeep and atv access allowing people with disabilities to access Cathedral Arch. This motorized access should continue and could be enhanced if the Forest Service would extend the road up Arch Canyon to Angel Arch. The distance between the two arches is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.

At present there is a non-motorized trail (it used to be a designated road) labelled #003 that drops into Upper Rogers Flat below the mesa top and then goes West to the head of Texas Canyon and then South and East along the Southside of Texas Canyon and comes out onto Texas Flat on BLM lands. This is a fantastic trail that has several good vista overlooks into Texas Canyon. It should be designated as a motorized ATV trail which would greatly add to the trail system in San Juan County.

Management of certain grazing allotments would be more complicated under management for the Shash Jaa Monument and would become more complex if also designated as wilderness. One such allotment is the Bears Ears Allotment in which the majority of the allotment is within the monument and also includes wilderness evaluation units. Prohibition or limitations on motorized maintenance of range improvements could make this allotment unsustainable.

Dry Mesa

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural with little evidence of non-native species that are obvious to the general public. The Dry Mesa unit goes from ponderosa pine woodland on top of Elk Ridge, down through mixed conifer/aspen slopes to be dominated by pinyon/juniper, Gambel oak and Big Sagebrush communities in most of the unit. Important big game winter range is located in the north and big game summer range in the south. The surrounding canyons are Mexican spotted owl breeding/roosting habitat, and the mesa tops are utilized for foraging by this federally listed species in addition to other raptors such as golden eagles and peregrine falcons. Mexican Spotted Owl PAC's are located on cliff faces, as well as 3 goshawk TSA's in the south. The unit is also habitat for black bears, wild turkeys and leopard frogs. There are no known populations of proposed SCC plants. Non-natives in the area consists of a small amount of Russian knapweed in the southwest portion of the area which covers approximately 10 acres. Crested wheat grass, and smooth brome are prevalent throughout the area, especially where vegetation treatments have occurred like in the Elk Ridge area. Cheat grass is also present. Non-native grasses are generally not noticeable by the general public.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots. Large portions of the unit have been chained (Dry Mesa), but most of them are older chaining's (1950's-1960s) and are not noticeable. The commercial logging is over 20 years old and appears to have regrown and become less noticeable. Signs from the logging operations are primarily cut stumps and some old remnants of haul roads that are reclaiming. Thinning has occurred more recently in the southern end of the unit but those treatments are not highly visible and not substantially noticeable. Some stumps are visible, but they are generally designed to blend naturally with the surrounding environment.

1c. Prevalence of improvements is overall low throughout the area and are dispersed throughout the area. Improvements include 12 miles of let down barbed wire fence, some post and pole fence, 34 stock ponds and 10 troughs. Most reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, however, several large stock ponds are very visible due to their proximity to Dry Mesa Road and their large size. Also, vegetation is sparse and view shed is open, making some of the stock ponds very visible. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds but they do affect the area adjacent to them. Some old mine tailings piles occur on the rims of the canyons. There is a large 2 acre research range enclosure made out of wood post and wire for wildlife at the end of the Dry Mesa road. The southern part of the unit contains

some old roads that are reclaiming themselves, but are still noticeable on the landscape. Several non- motorized trails start in this polygon and access the Dark Canyon wilderness: Kigalia Trail (1 mile), Brushy Knoll Trail (1 mile), Wooden Shoe Trail (approx. 1.5 mile), Rig Canyon Trail (3/4mile). This area also contains two motorized trails: One is 2.5 mile long Brushy Knoll, which is mostly impassable and naturally reclaimed on the ground and the other trail is .5 miles long Twin Springs trail. Some old logging roads and user created motorized trails are visible in the Dry Mesa area. There are some aspen exclosures that were designed to be temporary and appear natural.

Rating

1a. High

1b. Moderate

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude are possible in much of the area. Most of the area is surrounded by the designated Dark Canyon Wilderness. The Dry Mesa Road is located in the center of the unit and receives a fair amount of use for range activities, maintaining range developments, hunting, and ATV use. On the mesa you can see road use. Opportunity for solitude are possible in the canyons and when you get closer to the wilderness area. The mesa is more influenced by the road and motorized activities which detracts from the feeling of solitude. The southern portion of the unit is closer to the more heavily used roads along Elk Ridge. There is fairly light use of the trails in this unit with about 1000 people a year. The road runs right down the middle of the polygon.

2b. There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which includes day hiking and backpacking in conjunction with the Dark Canyon Wilderness. There is excellent Big Game (Mule Deer, Elk and Black Bear) hunting, as well as opportunities for visiting heritage sites. Wooden Shoe trail begins in the poly and is of very high quality.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, Mexican Spotted Owl PAC's are located on cliff faces, as well as 3 goshawk TSA's in the south. The unit is also habitat for black bears, wild turkeys and leopard frogs.

B. Yes, Numerous viewpoints into Dark Canyon SMS of District

C. Yes, NR eligible sites present. Some sites, such as Doll House, are of regional significance.

D. No

E. No

F. Yes, cultural resources.

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the area. Dry Mesa Road runs through the center of the unit, and many stock ponds are located on Dry Mesa that need occasional maintenance. There are several cherry stem roads within the unit leading to popular viewpoints. The unit is almost completely surrounded by the designated Dark Canyon Wilderness. The top portions of Woodenshoe and Peavine Canyons are within the Dark Canyon Woodenshoe IRA. Some unauthorized motorized use occurs within the unit. There is currently no active mining, but future development is possible with the existing uranium claims. A small portion of the unit around the Doll House Ruin is within the Shash Jaa National Monument.

Rating

5a. Moderate due to the ponds and the road running through the middle of the polygon, and popular view points.

San Juan County Evaluation

There are 2 cattle allotments within the Dry Mesa Unit; the Twin Springs Allotment and the Bears Ears Allotment. The Bears Ears Allotment is found South and East of the top of the rim of Peavine Canyon and basically contains one pasture of the three pasture rest-rotation grazing system for the allotment. The remainder of the Dry Mesa Unit produces about 50% of the grazing capacity of the rest-rotation system on the Twin Springs Allotment.

Commercial logging was conducted in the 1950s/1960s in areas described as:

Basically all of the South Elk Ridge mesa top including the Kigalia Point area of the Dry Mesa Unit which extends North from the Junction of Forest Highways #0108 and #0088 and is bounded by Peavine Canyon on the West and Kigalia Canyon on the East; along with the area encompassed North from where road #0108 changes from going West and turns North toward Twin Springs; also the Woodenshoe Point area between Woodenshoe Canyon on the West and Cherry Canyon on the East that extends to where the road #0108 drops off the mesa top onto Dry Mesa. Evidence of logging includes numerous roads (both closed and open) and cut pine stumps.

Past uranium mining activity is evident in the Peavine Terrace Mine and the Kigalia Point Mine along with another mine along the West side of Kigalia Point above Peavine Canyon. There was also past mining activity on the Northeast side of the Twin Springs area along the top of the slope on the West side of Peavine Canyon and also additional past mining activity on the East

side of Woodenshoe Canyon. Roads, tailings piles, and in some cases open mine adits still exist in these areas.

These areas should be rated as Moderate for Apparent Naturalness due to the evidence of commercial logging and mining activity and presence of non-natives grass species such as Crested Wheatgrass, Smooth Brome and Cheatgrass.

Going North past Brushy Knoll and to the end of the Dry Mesa Unit there is an abundance of range improvements including stock ponds, spring and trough developments, fences, two large corrals constructed adjacent to road #0108 (one is on the Twin Springs Allotment and the other is on the Bears Ears Allotment). There are also two cowboy camps under Special Use Permits to the livestock permittees on the South end of the Dry Mesa Unit. One is located at Twin Springs on road #5391 and one just North of the junction of roads #0088, #010 and #5341 at the Black Cabin site at the North end of road #5341. Both of the Permits include cabins, horse barns and corrals at these cowboy camps.

On Dry Mesa there are numerous stock ponds (probably 15 to 20) that have been constructed to provide water for livestock and wildlife, as well as an extensive chaining and reseeding project that was done in the late 1970's on the Northwest end of Dry Mesa. The stock ponds are the only sources for water on Dry Mesa as Cooper Springs on the North End of the mesa has dried up. There is one additional spring that is located on Forest Road #5131 (north of Cooper Spring) under the rim. A dozer pushed a road off the hill to the spring and it was developed, but as it turned out, the road was too steep and the spring too distant for cattle to use. During years of drought water is hauled in a 10 wheeler water truck to dispersal points on the mesa.

The Doll House Ruin is located on the Northwest end of Dry Mesa and has been included in the Shash Jaa Monument. Visitation and traffic to this area has significantly increased in the last few years.

The overall rating for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude and Manageability on this unit should be moderate, with the possible exception of the East side of Dry Mesa. This area between the small mountain range on the East side of the Dry Mesa Road #0108 from Brushy Knoll to road #5135 near Cooper Springs (a distance of approximately 5 miles) is an isolated area that has no roads or trails and receives very little visitation by hikers. The only range improvement is one large stock pond on the North end of this area at the end of Road #5135. There are scenic vista points along the rim with views into Peavine Canyon. This small area could be rated higher for wilderness characteristics.

Chippean and Allen Canyons

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural within the unit. Non-native species are generally not apparent in the unit but some invasive species do occur primarily along roads species include; include bind weed and knap weed. Approximately 1 acre of open meadows have been affected by invasive.. Smooth brome and Kentucky blue grass are present in many areas. Crested wheatgrass is located in the lower elevations where it has been seeded after treatments. Some musk thistle is present at an old mine site just off the road Non-native species are not evident on the landscape in this unit. Unit is dominated by pinyon/juniper woodland, often mixed with Gambel oak, and also includes important wetland and riparian components. There are stands of ponderosa pine and mixed conifer scattered around the unit. SCC plants in the unit include *Cymopterus beckii* and *Erigeron kachinensis*. There is also suitable habitat for *Oxypolis fendleri* and *Plantanthera zothecina*. The SCC wildlife species Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis occur in the unit. Other wildlife includes ringtail, woodrats and western rattlesnakes. The unit contains the Cliff Dwellers Pasture Research Natural Area (RNA) which was designated in 1991 to protect the unique vegetation communities including Water birch & Gambel oak-bigtooth maple bottomland communities. The RNA is an ungrazed box canyon with a unique mesic oak/maple and water birch plant community due to a shallow water table, it is surrounded by Navajo sandstone cliffs and contains a significant sandstone arch.

1b. Vegetation appears natural in the unit. Vegetation treatments have occurred in the Brushy Basin portion of the unit including chaining and mastications. The projects have been designed to mimic natural disturbances and are not substantially noticeable. The treatments are located in a small portion of the unit. Commercial logging has occurred in the northern portion of the unit, over 20 years ago and appears to have regrown and become less noticeable. Signs from the logging operations are primarily cut stumps and some old remnants of haul roads that are reclaiming. The Johnson Creek timber harvest, thinning and prescribed fire treatments were conducted within the unit to reduce the density of ponderosa pine forest and to restore those areas to a more natural ponderosa pine forest. The affect is noticeable now due to browned needles, but it will naturalize over time.

1c. The evidence of human activities occurs in scattered spots and the appearance of the developments do not detract from apparent naturalness in most of the unit. There are 8 stock ponds, one wooden corral that is not visible from any road, and 9 troughs along with 2.5 miles of barbed wire fencing. All reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at

the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds. There is a 1600 feet of buried water pipeline and associated air relief valves within the unit that is part of the infrastructure of the Blanding municipal water system. The pipeline is located approximately 200 feet from the Johnson Creek road and affects the naturalness of a small portion of the unit. There are three short, lightly used motorized trails in the polygon totaling less than 4 miles. There are 18 miles of non-motorized system trails in the unit, but they are not regularly maintained and rarely used. There is a minimal presence of old decommissioned roads. Roads that were associated with old logging operations are reclaiming and are minimally noticeable. There are some aspen exclosures, but they are not highly visible and were designed to be temporary.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High.

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude and the feeling of being alone are common within this unit. There is a little used cherry stem route along Chippean Ridge. There are two inholding in the Bayles Ranch Area with a cherry stem access road, but most of the unit is free from the impacts of roads. The 18 miles of non-motorized trails located within the unit are rarely used and do not impact the opportunities for solitude. Access to the southern portion of the units difficult because of the Ute Allotment lands, which increases the opportunities for solitude in the unit .There are some minimal range activities that occur generally in June and October. Opportunity for solitude is possible throughout much of the area. The eastern portion of the unit adjacent to the Causeway Road is used for firewood gathering, hunting, and dispersed camping but does not impact the overall opportunities for solitude throughout the unit.

2.b There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include excellent day hiking and some backpacking opportunities. There are no regularly maintained trails and many of the routes are restricted by Ute allotment lands with no public access. There is also excellent Big Game (Mule Deer, Elk and Black Bear) hunting as well as opportunities for visiting heritage sites which are of high quality.

Rating

2a. High

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

- A. Yes, Research Natura Area
- B. Yes, Arch in Cliff Dwellers Pasture, Chippean rock formations
- C. Yes, Numerous NR eligible sites with several of regional significance. Sites are part of the proposed Abajo Archaeological District. Of all parcels, portions of this parcel have high wilderness values. Allen-Chippean need protection.
- D. Yes the Cliff Dwellers Pasture RNA
- E. No
- F. Yes, RNA

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and management considerations affects isolated spots and makes management to preserve the areas wilderness characteristics possible throughout the area. There are two inholdings and a few cherry stem roads, but most of the unit is undeveloped with no conflicting uses. Two IRA's are located within the unit which include the Chippean Ridge and Cliff Dwellers Pasture IRAs which are managed under the 2001 Roadless Rule. The unit also includes the Cliff Dwellers Pasture, RNA. The 1994 Oil and Gas EIS made most of the area not available for oil and gas leasing. The Ute allotment lands make it difficult to access the area from the south.

Rating
5a. High

San Juan County Evaluation

Portions of 4 grazing allotments are found in this unit, including the Gooseberry Allotment along the East side of road #0106 in the South Cottonwood drainage; the Cottonwood Allotment in the upper part of Road #0106 and on the South side of the Causeway Road # 0095 from the Round Mountain Junction and extends East to Little Dry Mesa at the Causeway; the West Mountain Allotment from Little Dry Mesa on the South West Side of Road #0095 to the just past the Dry Wash Drainage; and the Camp Jackson Allotment from just past the Dry Wash drainage and following the East rim of Dry Wash drainage to Jim Mike Mesa at the Forest Boundary along Road #5276, and then west along the Forest Boundary to Road #0095 in Johnson Creek. The Utes had a horse allotment in the Chippean Ridge area but the the allotment was terminated around 20 years ago.

There are some areas of older uranium mining activity in the Unit below the switch backs in South Cottonwood on the East side of Road #0106 in the vicinity of the Rincon area South of the Reef of Rocks. There was also mining activity along the rim between Brushy Basin and the Dry Wash drainage near the Forest Boundary in the Southeast portion of the unit.

There was also some Pinyon/Juniper chaining and reseeding in the Rincon area of South Cottonwood drainage in the 1960's. Additionally there was some Pinyon/Juniper chaining and reseeding in the 1960's in the Brushy Basin area in the Southeast part of the unit.

There is a small Research Natural Area just North of the Bayles Ranch (Private Land) in what is called Cliff Dwellers Pasture or Jack's Pasture that is closed to grazing. That area contains some interesting Anasazi ruins and a large natural arch and may have some merit for wilderness potential but it is small and already protected through its designation as a Research Natural Area.

At one time there was a wagon road from South Cottonwood up Allen Canyon to the private land at the Bayles Ranch. Hay raised at the Bayles Ranch was fed to calves there during the winter and the wagon road was used by motorized vehicles as access to the ranch.

There are also some Anasazi ruins below the Bayles Ranch in alcoves in the Eastern side canyons of Allen Canyon.

The area from the junction of Road #0095 and Mormon Pasture Mountain Road #5191 East and South of Road #0095 was part of the accelerated commercial logging of the late 1950's into the 1970's and extended East to the area of the Causeway. There are a number of existing and closed logging roads in the Chippean area South of Chippean Rocks. Most of the commercial logging did not extend more than a mile or two South of Road #0095. These areas should be rated as Moderate in Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability.

There are range improvements, including stock ponds, spring and trough developments, that need periodic maintenance by motorized equipment (dozers or trackhoes). Designation as wilderness would preclude or severely limit maintenance of these improvements.

The remainder of the unit except for the private land area of the Bayles Ranch should be rated as High for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude and Manageability. However, it should be noted that this area is quite typical of most of the Pinyon/Juniper areas on the Monticello District and throughout the County and as such would be characterized as not having any outstanding wilderness attributes.

Hammond and Notch Canyons

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appears natural within the unit. Non-native species are not readily evident. A wide variety of habitats occur in this unit. The unit is primarily pinyon juniper woodlands and mountain brush on mesa tops with some Aspen, Ponderosa pine stands, and mixed conifers at higher elevations. Riparian areas with species such as Fremont cottonwood, Canyon Maple, Western river birch, and willow in the canyon bottoms are located in the unit as well. These areas are critical habitat for Mexican spotted owls, and also for peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and spotted bats. Abert squirrels are also found in this unit, as well as some summer and winter ranges for big game. SCC wildlife includes the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis. SCC plants that may occur in the unit are Navajo penstemon and Kachina daisy. Non-natives include Salt cedar (Tamarisk) in Hammond Canyon, but it has been treated and is not common. Some Canada thistle is also located in several areas in the unit near the Gooseberry Guard Station. Canada thistle affects less than 1/10th of an acre within the unit.

1b. Vegetation in this unit appears natural. Commercial logging has occurred along the edges of the unit. The commercial logging is over 20 years old and appears to have regrown and become less noticeable. Signs from the logging operations are primarily cut stumps and some old remnants of haul roads that are reclaiming. Thinning has occurred more recently but those treatments are not highly visible and not substantially noticeable.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity and developments are scattered in the unit. There are 13 stock ponds and 9 troughs, as well as 6.25 miles of barbed wire fence. All reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds. Recently, temporary aspen exclosures were built in the unit as well as an additional wood/wire permanent exclosure. There are about 3.5 miles of motorized trails in the northern portion of the unit. Approximately 10 miles of non-motorized trails are also present in the unit. User created routes and level 1 roads can be seen in a few areas but are very minimal and are being reclaimed.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude and the feeling of being alone and remote from civilization are prevalent throughout the unit. The Gooseberry and Chimney Park OHV Trails are located in the northern portion of the unit and receive relatively low levels of use. An inholding exists at the bottom of Hammond Canyon that was farmed in the past but is no longer used and does not have an access road. The unit is adjacent to the Elk Ridge and South Cottonwood Roads that are major access routes to the area, but they do not impact the opportunities for solitude to a high degree. In the canyons, roads and human activities are not visible and the sound of vehicles cannot be heard. It is easy to get a feeling of remoteness and solitude when away from roads and OHV trails. There are two allotments in this area but they are not currently active and have not been since 2002.

2b. There are abundant high quality opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include excellent day hiking, backpacking and horse riding. There is also excellent big game (Mule Deer, Elk and Black Bear) hunting. High quality opportunities for visiting heritage sites exist in the unit. Some rock climbing has been developed and opportunities for new routes exist. The steep and rugged terrain provides a high level of challenge and risk.

Rating

2a. High

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, These areas are critical habitat for Mexican spotted owls, and also for peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and spotted bats. Abert squirrels are also in this unit, as well as some summer and winter ranges for big game. SCC wildlife includes the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis. SCC plants that may occur in the unit are Navajo penstemon and Kachina daisy.

B. Yes, Sandstone towers and arches

C. Yes, Archeological District? Dons notes

D. No

E. No

F. Yes, ungrazed canyon bottoms

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and management considerations affects isolated spots and makes management to preserve the areas wilderness characteristics possible throughout the area. There is one inholding and a few short cherry stem roads, but most of the unit is undeveloped with no conflicting uses. Most of the unit is within the Hammond Notch IRA. The allotments in the unit have been in non-use since 2002 and not grazed. Ute allotment lands are located to the east of the unit. The unit is surrounded by national forest on all other sides. The 1994 Oil and Gas EIS made much of the area not available for oil and gas leasing. A portion of the unit was also proposed for wilderness designation in the Utah Public Lands Initiative (PLI) drafted by Utah's Congressional delegation. The northern portion of the unit contains the Gooseberry and Chimney Park OHV trails which would make management for wilderness character more difficult in that area.

Rating
5a. High

San Juan County Evaluation

The mesa top has been impacted by commercial timber sales as well as past and current timber stand improvement activities including thinning, under-burning and Ponderosa Pine seedling plantations (to reforest some bark beetle infestation areas).

For the last 30 plus years aspen clones have been dying out due to old age in many areas on the mesa tops of Elk Ridge. It is thought that wildlife (deer and elk) and cattle have been eating the young aspen seedlings to the extent that regeneration has been reduced. The aspen stands have high forage value for livestock and wildlife, therefore perpetuation of these stands is desired. The Forest Service has constructed a number of 8 foot tall exclosures on the mesa top within this Polygon to restrict wildlife and cattle from grazing in the aspen stands in hopes of stimulating aspen growth and renewal of decadent aspen clones. These exclosures are apparent and visible from the roads in this area including North and South of the Gooseberry Guard Station, along the road to Deadman Point, and in the Redd Pasture area.

These mesa tops are also included for both the Gooseberry and Babylon Grazing Allotments under permit to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Both allotments have been in non-use status since 2003 but could be stocked with livestock again in the future. There are many range improvements in these allotments including spring and trough developments and stock ponds. The North end of this unit also falls within the Cottonwood Allotment which is currently grazed by livestock.

There is a road (not shown on the Wilderness Evaluation polygon maps) that leads East into Poso Pasture about 50 yards North of the intersection of Forest Roads #0088 and #5160. The road extends about three quarters of a mile to two cabins (one is log and one is a wood frame house with a stucco covering) and an old corral. This area was the cowboy camp headquarters

for the Gooseberry Allotment. It used to be under Special Use Permit but this may have lapsed since the Ute Tribe has been taking non-use on this allotment since 2003. The facilities are run down at present.

There are old uranium mining areas and roads on the North side of Hammond Canyon and on the North and South sides of the Big Notch, along with the old Marcie Mine on the East Side of the North Elk Ridge Mesa where motorized trail #010 drops off the mesa. There was also extensive mining activity (King Edward mine and several others) on the West side of Road #0106 in the bottom of Cottonwood Canyon. There is also a mine site near East Point just South and East of the Big Notch. Forest Road #5319 ties into road #0200 and eventually to the Posey Trail #100 which leads into Hammond Canyon. It is interesting to note that the first 200 yards of the trail follows a road and crosses the landing of the area where the adit to a mine is located (the adit is closed). The Forest Service closed the North half of Loop Road #5319 several years ago.

There are two motorized trails in this unit. Trail #010 runs from the mesa top Easterly past the Marcie Mine down to Upper Horse Flats and eventually to the South Cottonwood Road #0106. Trail #445 leads from the Gooseberry Guard Station Easterly to the South Cottonwood Road #0106.

Because of the past and present activities related to commercial logging (roads and visible stumps), livestock use (developed ponds, springs and fences), mining (roads, adits and tailings dumps), aspen stand exclosures, open and closed roads along the mesa tops, and two motorized trails leading from the mesa down to the South Cottonwood Road #0106, ratings for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability should be moderate at best for all of the mesa tops area and for the slopes dropping into South Cottonwood from Chimney Park North.

The area below the mesa top East to South Cottonwood Road #0106 and South from Chimney Park including Notch Canyon and Hammond Canyon should be in a separate polygon as these areas have some wilderness characteristics and higher values for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability than areas on the mesa tops and in the North end of the Polygon.

There are private Indian lands (inholdings) in the lower portion of Hammond Canyon that were farmed at one time and there is still some farming equipment on these lands (Note: There is an old road that that comes from South Cottonwood Road #0106 and crosses private Indian land adjacent to road #0106 and comes up from the mouth of Hammond Canyon to the private Indian land above the Forest Boundary). Cream Pots Road #5399 comes from the South Elks Road #0092 and ends in the bottom of Hammond Canyon near the junction of the Posey Trail #0166 and the Hammond Canyon Trail #012.

There are several Anasazi ruins in Hammond Canyon including the Sticks Ruin which is just below the mesa South of Posey Trail #166 and the BB Ruin and the 3 Fingers Ruin which are on the North side of Hammond Canyon Trail #012.

South Abajos

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appears natural in most of the unit. The vegetation is diverse across this unit. The lower edge of the unit has pinyon/juniper and gambel oak woodlands, grading into ponderosa pine stands which have been managed for timber production. Non-native species are evident in isolated areas of the unit. Non-native plants in the unit include about 20 acres of inventoried Canada thistle and bull thistle (not inventoried) which are located mostly on the east side of the unit. There is approximately 10 acres of Russian knapweed near the old Blue Mountain Ski Lift. Crested wheat grass, Kentucky blue grass, smooth brome and cheat grass are located in disturbed areas in the lower elevations. Higher elevation slopes in the unit contain spruce-fir, aspen and subalpine meadows. Some wetlands and riparian habitats are located in this unit as well. The area is important mule deer summer range, with big game winter range in the lower country. Four Goshawk habitats are located in this unit. Proposed SCC wildlife includes the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis. The proposed SCC plants in the unit are *Erigeron abajoensis* and *Oxypolis fendleri*.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots within the unit. A variety of vegetation treatments including commercial timber harvest and fuels thinning projects have occurred in several areas such as North creek, Brushy Basin, and Blue Mountain Ranch area. The area around Blue Mountain Ranch has been logged as recently as 2016. Signs of the logging operation are currently noticeable such as temporary roads, decking piles, and cut stumps. The Brushy Basin treatments (mastication and hand thinning) were conducted within the last 5 years but have been designed to mimic natural disturbances and are not substantially noticeable.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There are 27 stock ponds and 34 troughs, as well as 11 miles of barbed wire fence. Several wood corrals are also located in the unit. All reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds. The old Blue Mountain Ski Area is within the unit. The lift towers and cables have been removed but the wood buildings at the bottom and top of the lift remain in place. The two old cut ski runs are still noticeable. The Wagon Wheel, Camp Jackson and Pipeline OHV Trails are within the unit and are all heavily used by motorized vehicles. Ditches, maintenance roads and diversion structures associated with the Blanding and Monticello municipal water systems exist within in the unit. The large Abajo Peak communications site is outside of the unit but visible from within much of the unit. There are 12 miles of motorized trails

and there are no non-motorized trails. Due to the proximity to the towns of Monticello, Blanding and the Blue Mountain Ranch, there are user created trails that are used for unauthorized motorized use in the unit.

Rating

1a. Moderate (due to thistle)

1b. Moderate

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude are limited in this unit. There are numerous cherry stem roads throughout the unit that are heavily used due to the proximity to Monticello and Blanding. The Abajo Peak cherry stem road that provides access to the Abajo Peak communication site, nearly divides the unit in half. There are three private inholdings, two of them contain residential structures and other associated developments that are surrounded by the unit. The Blue Mountain Ranch inholding contains numerous residential structures including an organized camp owned by a local church that is used extensively in the summer months for youth and group activities. The Camp Jackson inholding also contains residential structures around a small lake. The unit is adjacent to the paved Harts Draw road that is the primary access to the District. The popular Wagon Wheel, Camp Jackson and Pipeline OHV Trails are within the unit. From within the area, the Abajo Peak communications site is highly visible from much of the unit. Visitors can see the towns of Monticello and Blanding as well as a large area of wind turbines from within much of the unit. The North Creek Area within the unit is popular for winter recreation including snowmobiling. Hunting in this unit is popular in the fall and spring. Range management activities occur throughout the area. Range permittees use motorized vehicles as well as horses to maintain range facilities. The cherry stem roads within the unit introduce motorized uses and their associated sounds into the interior of the unit. Opportunities for solitude are available in areas of the Abajo Mountains such as Jackson Ridge, but opportunities in the unit overall are limited.

2b. There are opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation within the unit. Opportunities include peak bagging, hiking, backpacking, excellent hunting opportunities, horseback riding, and winter recreation which include backcountry skiing and snowshoeing.

Rating

2a. Low

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

4a. Yes, 4 Goshawk TSA's are located in this unit. SCC wildlife includes the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis. The SCC plants in the unit are Erigeron abajoensis and Oxypolis fendleri.

4b. No,

4c. Yes, National Register eligible sites with several of regional significance. Sites are part of the dense Ancestral Puebloan sites contained within the proposed Abajo Archaeological District.

4d. No

4e. No

4f. No

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and/or management considerations occurs across most of the area making it difficult to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics. This uses include numerous cherry stem roads, inholdings, and motorized trails as well as established motorized use winter.

Rating

5a. Low

San Juan County Evaluation

Parts of this unit were commercially logged in both the main fork and the North Fork of the Verdure drainage, the Recapture drainage, Dickson Gulch, Gold Queen drainage and the Pole Canyon drainage. Roads were constructed in these areas. Some of them have been water barred and closed.

Five grazing allotments are found within this Unit: the Camp Jackson Allotment, the Lakes Allotment, the South Creek Allotment, the North Creek Allotment and the Long Canyon Allotment. There are 27 stock ponds 34 troughs with springs and 11 miles of fence within the unit as noted in the Forest Service evaluation. There are also 3 livestock corrals in the unit. There was some Pinyon/Juniper chaining done in the 1960's between the Johnson Creek and Recapture drainages in the southern part of the unit.

There are several aqueduct and irrigation routes that carry water off of the Forest in this unit. The first is an aqueduct pipeline along the West edge of the unit that collects water from the Johnson Creek, Cherry Creek, and Gooley Gulch drainages and transports this water to reservoirs just North of Blanding. The pipeline begins in Johnson Creek about 100 yards north of Forest Road #0079 and runs South for approximately 4-1/2 miles to the Forest Boundary just East of Forest Road #0095. Another segment of pipeline picks up water out of the upper part of the Recapture drainage and carries water to the Camp Jackson Reservoir which is located on private property in the unit. There is also a pipeline system on the East side of the Blues which picks up water from the Gold Queen, Dickson, Pole Canyon, and Bankhead drainages and

transports the water to reservoirs just above Monticello. These pipelines are approximately 10 miles in length. There is also water collected from the Dickson and Gold Queen drainages via ditch and natural drainage and carried down to the Pioneer Irrigation Ditch which has its headgate just south of Road #5262 in Shingle Mill Draw. The Pioneer Irrigation runs from the headgate to the Forest Boundary on the East side of the unit for about 1 mile.

Several areas of gold mining activities took place in this area in the early 1900's. Old mine workings are apparent in the upper drainages of Gold Queen on the East side and on the West side in Cooley Gulch of the Blues. There were mills constructed in both the Gold Queen and Cooley Gulches. There was also gold mining activity in Dickson Gulch and the North Creek Drainage. Tailings piles, adits, roads, and trails resulting from this mining activity are still evident in these areas.

There are three communication towers in the unit, one with a large number of communication towers on the top of Abajo Peak which is the highest peak on the Monticello District. Another is the Cold Springs communication site which is 200 yards North of the intersection of Forest Roads #'s 0087 and 5254. The last one is just inside the Forest Boundary about 2 miles West of Monticello City and a ¼ mile South of Road #49. Power lines run to all three of these sites from the Monticello area and are visible from various locations on the front range of the Blues. The power line poles that lead down slope from the Abajo Peak communication site were removed and the power line was buried underground for about 2 and ½ miles from Abajo Peak off of the steep Eastern slope in 2016.

The Forest Service stated there are 3 areas of private inholdings in this unit. There are actually four. There is a 160 acre parcel just North of Gold Queen Gulch which has a cabin. There are 160 acres in the bottom of the Verdure drainage which has probably in excess of 20 cabins and 2 church recreation campsites. There are also about 30 acres on the top of the mountain about ½ mile south of the Abajo Peak Communication site. And there is another approximately 50 acre area in the Camp Jackson area where there are two reservoirs and a number of cabins, some of which are used as rentals.

There are numerous roads and motorized and non-motorized trails in this unit. All of these roads and trails receive a lot of use. The area is used quite heavily for recreation activities and a lot of dispersed camping is evident throughout the area in the spring, summer, and fall.

This area has a lot of activity during the hunting seasons for turkey, deer, elk, bear and mountain lion. These seasons start in August and last throughout the fall and into the winter months. There is a lot of dispersed camping in conjunction with these hunts.

It is apparent that this area has a lot of activities, structures, and improvements that distract from Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability for this unit, therefore it should be rated somewhere between Low and Moderate for these values.

Elk Ridge

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. This unit on the rims of Dark Canyon is dominated by ponderosa pine forest, mixed with Gambel oak and aspen. There are mixed conifer-aspen forests on the slopes below the mesa top. There are occasional springs and seeps and open grassy meadows which provide an important forage resource. The area is used by deer, elk and turkeys for summer range. There are Abert's squirrels and northern goshawks. Two proposed SCC species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. Proposed SCC plant species include *Penstemon navajoa*, *Cymopterus beckii*, *Erigeron kachinensis* and *Allium geyeri* var. *chatterleyi*. Non-natives include some crested wheat grass. There is also a small patch of Canada Thistle within the polygon.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. Commercial logging has occurred within the unit but is over 20 years old and appears to have regrown and become less noticeable. Signs from the logging operations are primarily cut stumps and remnants of reclaimed haul roads. Non-commercial thinning has occurred more recently but those treatments are not highly visible and not substantially noticeable. Recent thinning treatment on North Elk Ridge remain noticeable on the landscape.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There are 12 stock ponds and 21 troughs as well as about 5.5 miles of t-post barbed wire fence. There are two corrals, one in Big Flat which is large and highly visible and noticeable from Elk Ridge Road. The second corral is small and made of natural material. It is at the end of a small road that is not highly used. All reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds. There are areas of mining activity on Kigalia Point which includes adits, tailing piles and access roads. Woodenshoe Point and Brushy Knoll have noticeable access roads and tailings piles that were removed from the unit. Other mining claims/developments are not substantially noticeable within the unit. Two miles of motorized trails exist in the unit (939, 938), as well as two miles of non-motorized trails. Several temporary aspen exclosure fences exist within the unit as well. Old roads exist in the unit, but they are reclaiming.

Rating

1a. High

- 1b. High
- 1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude are possible throughout much of the area. The western edge of the area is adjacent to the designated Dark Canyon Wilderness. Several cherry stems provide motorized access into the unit that have potential to impact solitude but most are little used. Dispersed camping is popular occur along the main roads. There is moderate to high hunting use in the Spring and Fall. Dark Canyon Wilderness users pass through the unit to access the Wilderness. There are three allotments within the unit, two of which have not been used since 2002. The Big Flat area gets relatively high levels of use around the corral and cabin associated with livestock grazing. The further visitors get away from the cherry stem roads and down into the canyons, the better the opportunities for solitude is become.

2b. There are excellent opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation when viewed in context with the adjacent Dark Canyon Wilderness. These opportunities include hiking and backpacking. There is also excellent Big Game (Mule Deer, Elk and Black Bear) hunting as well as horseback riding.

Rating

- 2a. Moderate, but once in canyons, high opportunities exist.
- 2b. Moderate, but when considered with adjacent wilderness, opportunities high.

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, Abert's squirrels and northern goshawks. The two SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. SCC plant species include Penstemon navajoa, Cymopterus beckii, Erigeron kachinensis and Allium geyeri var. chatterleyi.

B. No, though some high quality from this unit into Dark Canyon, north longs point, Dead man point

C. Yes, There are few sites, but NR eligible sites present. There are no exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience.

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the

area. There are numerous cherry stem roads within the unit. The unit is adjacent to the designated Dark Canyon Wilderness. The top portions of the canyons are within the Dark Canyon/ Woodenshoe IRA . There are existing mineral claims in this unit that could be developed in the future. There are several motorized trails within the unit that are little used. The North Elk Aspen Treatment project is a signed decision and is located partially within the unit. The project entails building aspen enclosures and conducting restoration thinning.

Rating

5a. Moderate

San Juan County Evaluation

All of the mesa tops in this unit were logged commercially in the 1960's and 1970's. As a result there are roads established over the majority of the unit. Some of the roads have been closed by water-bars and barriers. Old logging stumps are evident. Timber Stand Improvements by the Forest Service continue to occur in this unit including thinning, Ponderosa Pine tree planting, and some underburning projects. There has also been at least one 8 foot tall enclosure that limits grazing by livestock and wildlife that has been constructed in the Redd Pasture area of Deadman Point to try and stimulate aspen regeneration. As explained earlier, the aspen clones in many area of the District have been dying out.

During the 1960's there were some roads dozed and subsequent drilling for uranium just under the South rim of Deadman Point. Part of the Horse Pasture Trail #025 is on this drilling road. There is also a mine site near the Northwest end of Steamboat Point with roads and tailings piles there.

Three grazing allotments are found in this unit. Parts of the Babylon and Gooseberry Allotments which are permitted to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe fall within this unit. The Babylon and Gooseberry Allotments have not been stocked since 2003. Part of the Cottonwood Allotment falls in this Unit from Se-go Flat North. As noted by the Forest Service, there are 12 stock ponds, 21 spring and trough developments, and 5.5 miles of fencing in this unit. Several of the stock ponds are highly visible from Forest Road #0088 in the Big Flat area. There is also a cowboy cabin and camp area under Special Use Permit for the Permittee on the Cottonwood Allotment in the Big Flat area along with a livestock corral.

There are two scenic vista points overlooking the Dark Canyon Wilderness along Deadman Point Road #0178; one at the trailhead for Horse Pasture Trail #025 and another at the end of the road where it overlooks the confluence of Peavine Canyon with Dark Canyon. There is also a good scenic Vista Point at the Big Notch where one can overlook the upper headwaters of Dark Canyon on the West and the head of Notch Canyon on the East. With some removal of trees that block the view into the Wilderness Area there would be a scenic vista at the end of Forest Road #0178 on Steamboat Point.

This unit is well roaded with quite a bit of traffic, especially since the establishment of the Bears Ears Monument by President Obama. Past and present activities due to timber harvesting and subsequent Timber Stand Improvement activities, along with the past mining activities, structural range improvements and associated activity reduces the ratings for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability in this unit. The overall rating should be moderate for this unit.

Ruin Canyon

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. This unit is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodland. There is ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, aspen, big sagebrush and Gambel oak in the upper portions. This area has elk winter range, and important black bear habitat. The two proposed SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. Proposed SCC plant species include *Allium geyeri* var. *chatterleyi* and possibly *Plantanthera zothecina*. No noxious weeds are known in the area, but areas that were chained were also seeded and have smooth brome and crested wheat grass.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. Commercial logging has occurred within the unit, but is over 20 years old and appears to have regrown and become less noticeable. Signs from the logging operations are primarily cut stumps and some old remnants of haul roads that are reclaiming. An area of planted ponderosa pines that were planted and appear uniformly distributed, but may not be notable to the average visitor.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity and developments are scattered in the unit. Improvements include 1 stock pond and 2 troughs, 2.5 miles of barbed wire fence. The reservoir/troughs in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoir/troughs. The White Rim OHV Trail is 12 miles long and cuts through the center of the unit. There are several unauthorized user created trails, but they are not highly noticeable.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are possible due to the White Rim motorized trail, which is located in the unit. Hunting occurs in the spring and fall, but generally not a lot of recreation use is occurring in the area. There is a low occurrence of range management activities occurring in the area.

2.b There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation such as day hiking, possible backpacking, and hunting for big game. There are no maintained non-motorized trails in the unit.

Rating

2a. Moderate due to white rim trail.

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, The two SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. SCC plant species include *Allium geyeri* var. *chatterleyi* and possibly *Plantanthera zothecina*.

B. No

C. No, almost no survey. No known NR eligible sites. No exceptional values

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the area. The Ruin Canyon IRA is also located within the unit. The White Rim OHV trail is located within the unit, and forms the southern boundary of the Ruin Canyon IRA.

Rating

5a. IRA is HIGH (it uses the motorized trail as the boundary, so north of the trail very undeveloped) and the remaining would be moderate due to the OHV trail and other uses.

San Juan County Evaluation

The characteristics of this unit could be better evaluated by splitting the unit based on evidence of past activities. The canyon bottoms of Beef Basin Wash, Calf Canyon, Bull Canyon and Ruin Canyon up to the top of the rim below the White Rim Motorized Trail's #'s 424 and 425 should be in a separate polygon from the remainder of the unit as these areas show little evidence of human activity.

The mesa top was logged commercially between the 1950's and 1970's. There is evidence of numerous logging roads (some open, some closed) and evidence of cut stumps throughout the mesa top. Timber Stand Improvement activities including thinning have also been completed in this area.

This area falls within the Cottonwood Grazing Allotment and has at least one stock pond, several springs and troughs, plus one corral at the top of the trailhead for Trail Canyon Trail #007, and several miles of fence.

There is a cattle trail that leads from Crystal Spring on the top of North Long Point down into Beef Basin Wash on BLM lands. At least part of that trail was built by the CCC's (Civilian Conservation Corps) in the 1930's and has some historical significance.

This area on the mesa top down to the White Rim Trail should be rated as moderate for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability because of the logging, Timber Stand Improvement, motorized trail, and grazing activities in this area. The area north of the White Rim Trail to the Forest Boundary probably has some higher rating values than the mesa top area but the area is typical of the Pinyon/Juniper woodland on Forest and BLM lands in the area. As such, it wouldn't rate High for outstanding wilderness characteristics. Management could be similar or complementary to management on adjoining BLM lands.

Butler Wash (BLM WSA)

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. This unit is primarily pinyon/juniper woodland and barren rock. It may be utilized by big game in the winter, and by pinyon/juniper associated migratory birds such as black-throated gray warblers and gray vireo. No proposed SCC species are known to occur in the small unit. No Non-native species are documented or likely in the area.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There are no vegetation projects.

1c. There is no evidence of human activity. There are no developments for range, trails, roads, etc.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. There is little opportunity of feeling alone due to the size of the unit and it's proximity to a road. Solitude is possible when viewed in context with adjacent Butler Wash BLM WSA.

2.b Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited by the areas small size.

Rating

2a. Low due to size, but when considered with BLM, opportunities are possible.

2b. Low, but when considered with BLM land, more opportunities exist.

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. No

B. No

C. No, Few sites, but NR eligible sites present. No exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

There are no conflicting uses but due to small size of the unit managing it for wilderness character would be difficult. When viewed in conjunction with the larger BLM WSA managing the wilderness character would be possible. The area is surrounded by a low use road on one side, and a BLM WSA on the other.

5a. Low due to size, but when considered with BLM could increase to moderate.

San Juan County Evaluation

BUTLER WASH UNITS - 652 & 653

Both of these units have basically been untrammelled by man but are so small in size they would not stand alone as a wilderness area. They are typical of the units on the East and West along the Forest boundary and are typical of the Pinyon/Juniper landscapes in this area. They would rate higher for Apparent Naturalness, but Moderate overall for Solitude and Manageability as tempered by small size of the units.

Butler Wash (BLM Lands w/ Wilderness Character)

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. The unit is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodland with some ponderosa pine, Gambel oak and mixed conifer stands in the upper portions. The area is important elk winter range. The two proposed SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. The proposed SCC plant species *Allium geyeri* var. *chatterley* is also found in the unit. There are no known non-native species, though cheat grass and smooth brome likely in the mountain brush area.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There are no vegetation treatments within the unit.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity. There is less than 1/10th of a mile of fence, and some old mining access roads.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Very little use occurs in the area. The area is small area but is adjacent to a larger area on BLM lands that was found to have wilderness character. Opportunities for solitude in canyons or when viewed in context with adjacent BLM lands.

2.b Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited by the areas small size but do exist. Day hiking, hunting, horseback riding are all possible.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. Low, but when considered with BLM- more moderate.

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. No

B. No

C. No, this area is unsurveyed. There are no known sites. Moderate potential for NR eligible sites to be present. Unknown potential for exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience to be present

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

There are no conflicting uses but due to small size of the unit managing it for wilderness character would be difficult. When viewed in conjunction with the larger BLM WSA managing the wilderness character would be possible.

Rating

5a. Low due to size, but when considered with BLM could increase to moderate.

San Juan County Evaluation

BUTLER WASH UNITS - 652 & 653

Both of these units have basically been untrammled by man but are so small in size they would not stand alone as a wilderness area. They are typical of the units on the East and West along the Forest boundary and are typical of the Pinyon /Juniper landscapes in this area. They would rate higher for Apparent Naturalness, but Moderate overall for Solitude and Manageability as tempered by small size of the units.

Horse Mountain

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not readily evident, but is a small area (1 acre) of Canada thistle at the very southern end of the unit. This unit has primarily Gabel Oak, pinyon juniper woodlands with Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands on the north facing slopes of the canyons. The Gambel oak habitat is important deer fawning habitat. Abert's squirrels live in the mature ponderosa pine forest. There are also black bears, turkeys and flammulated owls. Proposed SCC wildlife species present include the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, while there are no known populations of proposed SCC plants.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. The Big Flat vegetation treatments are over 20 years old and appear to have regrown and become less noticeable. Recent vegetation mastication (mastication) has occurred in a small portion of the eastern edge of the unit.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There are 10 stock ponds and 6 troughs, as well as about 5.8 miles of fence. All reservoirs/troughs in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/troughs. There are some mining impacts such as tailings, adits, and access roads in the northern portion of the unit but most have already been removed from the unit. There are 7.5 miles of motorized trails.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude exist in the area but are impacted by the amount of motorized trails in this unit. There are several motorized trails in the area (Davis Pocket and Horse Mountain) which receive a fair amount of use, especially during the hunting season. The unit is almost cut in half with the Davis Pocket cherry stem road. There is not a high level of visitation which increases opportunities for solitude.

2.b There are some opportunities to engage in primitive and unconfined recreation such as day hiking, hunting and horseback riding but they are impacted by the cherry stem roads and motorized trails. There are no- non motorized trails within the unit.

Rating

2a. Moderate due to the motorized trails.

2b. Moderate due to hunting.

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, Abert's squirrels live in the ponderosa pine. There are also black bears, turkeys and flammulated owls. SCC wildlife include the two bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and Fringed myotis

B. No

C. No, there are a few sites, but NR eligible sites present. No exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience.

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout a portion of the area. However the unit is nearly cut in half by a cherry stem road and the unit contains numerous motorized trails which would make it difficult to manage the unit for wilderness character. Some range management activities occur within the unit as well.

5a. Moderate

San Juan County Evaluation

There has been some commercial timber activity in the South end of this unit between Forest Roads #'s 0098, 0095 and 0192 with corresponding timber roads, some still open and some closed by waterbarring.

The Cottonwood Cattle Allotment is found within the area with springs with troughs, stock ponds, and fences in the area. (The Forest Service stated in their analysis that there are 10 stock ponds, 6 springs and troughs and just under 6 miles of fence in the unit). Some chaining was done on the East side of the Seven Sisters Mountain and some of the treatment areas appear to lap into this area. Wilderness designation would eliminate or severely limit motorized use of dozers and other equipment for maintenance of the stock ponds in the area.

There are 7 identified motorized trails in the area including the Big Flat to Davis Pocket Trail #444, and the Davis Pocket Trail #427 which ties the Davis Pocket Road #0098 with the Salt Creek Mesa Road #0088.

The area has been mined for uranium in the area of the Glade Pit; also along the East base of the Seven Sisters Buttes; at the junction of Davis Pocket Road #0098 and the Stevens Canyon Road #0097; and on the North end of the unit near Boundary Butte. A number of old dozed drilling and mining roads are found in the area, some have been closed but are still apparent.

Due to the activities of man for commercial timber activity, grazing, range improvements, mining and motorized trails the overall rating for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude and Manageability should be Moderate. This area does not have any outstanding wilderness attributes.

Abajo Mountains

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities generally appear natural. This large and diverse unit has representation of all the vegetation types on the Monticello District, including pinyon/juniper, ponderosa pine, aspen, Gambel oak and riparian habitats. On the peaks of the Abajo Mountains there are spruce-fir and mountain shrub/meadow communities. Wildlife in the unit includes mule deer, elk, turkeys, bobcat, northern goshawk, and Abert's squirrel. The two proposed SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. There is habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout. Several proposed SCC plant species are found in the unit, including *Erigeron abajoensis*, *Erigeron kachinensis*, *Allium geyeri* var *chatterleyi*, *Cymopterus beckii* and *Oxypolis fendleri*. Non-Natives in the unit include bind weed along roads, Kentucky blue grass and smooth brome. Areas on Maverick Point contain crested wheat grass.

1b. Vegetation generally appears natural. The Nizhoni Fire and Planting Treatments mimic natural disturbances and are not substantially noticeable. Recent mastication work in the Mormon Pasture area was designed to mimic natural landscapes/processes. Several prescribed and natural fires were managed for resource benefit and appear natural. The Little Dry Mesa and Starvation Point Treatments (commercial logging and tree planting) are over 20 years old and appear to have regrown and become less noticeable.

1c. Appearance of developments detract from apparent naturalness in some areas within the unit. There are 16 stock ponds and 33 troughs, as well as about 6 miles of barbed wire fence. All reservoirs/troughs in the unit are generally masked by surrounding vegetation and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors, unless they are standing directly at the development. There are line cabins in Allen and Blue Creek associated with the range allotments in the area. Shay Ridge, Shay Mountain, Aspen Flats, Red Ledges, Vega Creek, Indian Creek and Robertson Pasture motorized trails are located within the unit which total about 40 miles. Some of these motorized trails have seasonal closures for a portion of the year. In addition, there is 25 miles of non-motorized trail. There are some unauthorized user created routes in the unit, primarily in the Maverick Point and Shay Mountain areas. Ditches, maintenance roads and diversion structures associated with the Blanding water system exist within the unit.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Excellent opportunities for solitude exist in portions of the unit such as in the Tuerto Canyon, Trough Canyon and Blue Canyon areas. Opportunities for solitude in other portions of the unit are harder to find such as in the main portion of the Abajo Mountains where densities of roads and motorized trails are higher. There are several large cherry stem roads and numerous motorized trails in the unit which impact opportunities for solitude. Some of the most popular motorized trails on the District are found in this unit and they receive a fair amount of use. These trails include; Shay Ridge, Shay Mountain, Robertson Pasture, Aspen Flat and Vega Creek. Although most of these motorized trails are located in forested areas, visitors can hear motorized sounds from much of the unit near these trails. The unit is also popular for motorized winter recreation which occurs primarily in the North Creek area of the Abajo Mountains. This unit is a popular area for dispersed camping. The line (range) cabins in Allen Canyon, Blue Canyon and Mormon Pasture decrease the opportunities for solitude the immediate area. Range management activities occur from spring to fall throughout the unit. From much of the eastern portion of the unit the town of Monticello is visible, but from most the unit you cannot see human developments.

2.b There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include peak bagging, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, excellent hunting opportunities for big game, and winter recreation such as skiing, and snowshoeing.

2a. Moderate overall, but high in Blue creek and hop creek areas.

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

A. Yes, northern goshawk with 5 territories in the unit, and Abert's squirrel. The two SCC bat species, Townsend's big-eared bat and fringed myotis, occur in the unit. There is habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout. Several SCC plant species are found in the unit, including *Erigeron abajoensis*, *Erigeron kachinensis*, *Allium geyeri* var *chatterleyi*, *Cymopterus beckii* and *Oxypholis fendleri*.

B. No

C. No, few sites, but NR eligible sites present. No exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience.

D. No

E. No

F. No

5 - Manageability

The extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout portions of area, however conflicting uses and developments would make management difficult in other portions. Numerous motorized trails and cherry stems exist in the unit which would make managing the area for wilderness character difficult. There are two IRAs (Shay Mountain and Blue Mountain) within the unit.

Rating

5a. Moderate overall, but high in the blue creek and hop creek area.

San Juan County Evaluation

This is the largest Wilderness Evaluation polygon on the Monticello District. It may be better evaluated by breaking it into smaller units.

Numerous areas North of Forest Road #0095 (Causeway Road) were commercially logged during the period from the 1950's to the 1970's. This includes areas of Mormon Pasture Point, Maverick Point out to about Mud Canyon, Dry Basin, Little Dry Mesa and some of the area North and East of Nizhoni Campground. Several of the roads that were constructed are still used with others closed but still apparent due to the water bars constructed to close the routes.

Parts of 6 cattle allotments are located in the area, including the Cottonwood Allotment, the West Mountain Allotment, the Blue Creek Allotment, the Camp Jackson Allotment, the Harts Draw Allotment, and the North Creek Allotment. As such there are a lot of structural range improvements in the area, including spring and trough developments, stock ponds, livestock trails, and fences (16 stock ponds, 33 developed springs and troughs and 6 miles of fences per the Forest Service evaluation). There are also 4 cowboy line camps under special use permit located at Allen Canyon, Blue Creek, and Shay Ridge and Big Flat that are used by the cowboys for management of the allotments. The Allen Canyon camp is used for the West Mountain Allotment, the Blue Creek and Shay Ridge camps are used for the Blue Creek and Harts Draw Allotment, and the Big Flat camp for the Cottonwood Allotment. It should also be noted that there are 160 acres of private inholdings in Mormon Pasture where there are a cabin and corrals used for management of the Cottonwood Allotment. There was a successful prescribed fire and reseeding in the Pinyon/Juniper on Blue Creek Point some 20+ years ago. It is interesting to note that prior to the burn, forage production in that area was less than 50 pounds per acre; 2 years after treatment the area was producing over 2000 pounds of forage per acre.

There have also been mining and drilling activities in the area for uranium. One of the areas where quite a bit of activity took place was just West of the North Cottonwood Sandstone Ranger Station along Roads #'s 5067 and 5069. This area is out of the polygon. There were drill roads constructed and drilling done East of the North Cottonwood Sandstone Ranger Station in Hop Creek in the area of the Hop Creek Trail #022. The Dream Mine Gold Mill was

located in this unit just North and a little West of the road going into the Camp Jackson private land area, several of the Dream Mine tailings piles are visible on the East side of Forest Road #0079, however they are out of this unit. There is also a rock quarry at the end of Forest Road #5220 Northwest of the Nizhoni Campground. There were also several mines on the East and West side of Shay Mountain. The trail on the West Side of Shay Mountain labeled as #437 was actually a road constructed for a uranium mine. A drilling rig was pulled by a dozer up that road to the top of the mountain on the west side. Near the area of trail #447 on the East side of Shay Mountain a road was also constructed that led to a mine on the steep slope on the east face of the mountain (Note: Not certain if #447 was that road or if it was a little farther south and east of that road). There was also a copper mine called the Tuffy Mine on the East side of Shay Mountain. The access route for it was an old mule and burro trail that started in the bottom of Indian Creek and wound its way up the slick rock about ½ way up Shay Mountain.

There has been some terracing with dozers to help reduce erosion concerns on some of the watersheds in the high peaks of this unit in several areas including both East and West of the Spring Creek Saddle; and along Forest Road #0079 down to where the road crosses Indian Creek. There has also been some terracing on the steep slopes South of the Jackson Ridge Road.

In its analysis the Forest Service identified 40 miles of motorized and 25 miles of non-motorized trails in the unit.

There is also a tunnel and ditch that brings water from the Dry Wash Canyon drainage over into the Johnson Creek drainage where water is stored in the Dry Wash Reservoir. The Blanding Tunnel, which carries water from Indian Creek to reservoirs above Blanding has its entrance and exit to the tunnel in this unit. In conjunction with the tunnel there is a large ditch (probably a mile in length) that was built South and West of the tunnel that picks up runoff from the North side of Jackson Ridge and diverts the water to the tunnel entrance in Indian Creek. There is also a water transmission line that conveys water from the Cherry Creek, Johnson Creek, and Cooley Gulch drainages to reservoirs North of Blanding.

With the exception of the Blue Creek Canyon, Trough Canyon, Tuerto Canyon, and Hop Creek drainages the rating for Apparent Naturalness, Solitude, and Manageability should be moderate because of the timber, grazing, and mining activities, water transmission line, roads, and motorized and non-motorized trails in the area. Values for the 4 drainages listed above may be higher, but these areas are typical of the Pinyon/Juniper mesa tops and canyons throughout the Forest and county and, as such, don't have any outstanding wilderness character.

Southern La Sals

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. This unit contains diverse plant and animal communities from alpine to low elevation pinyon/juniper woodlands. The upper elevations of the unit contain a unique tundra ecosystem. Habitats in this unit include spruce/ fir forest, gambel oak, sub alpine meadows, mixed conifer/ aspen forest, conifer forest, and Colorado plateau upland. Animals in the unit include Pika (proposed scc), goshawks, golden eagle, black Rosie finch (proposed scc), and the Virginias warbler. The unit includes big game summer and winter range Introduced mountain goats use the high country of this unit. Several proposed SCC plant species are in the unit including the La Sal daisy, bakers oreoxix, la sal mountain groundsel, and east woods pediserta. Non-native species include Kentucky blue grass at lower elevations.

1b. Ecological conditions and the amount they have been impacted by human intervention vary greatly across this unit. The upper elevations and high elevation spruce/fir forests are little changed by human intervention. The lower elevations are more influenced by human interventions such as vegetation treatments. Vegetation treatments include chainings in the western portion of the unit that occurred in the 1960's. The treatments are not currently apparent on the landscape, but there are remnant piles of scattered logs and roots and a lower density of pinion and juniper within the treatment.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity throughout the majority of the unit and developments are scattered. In the lower elevations developments detract from apparent naturalness of the unit. Range improvements include 15 stock tanks (steel) and earthen reservoirs. There are 4.2 miles of barbed wire fence, and 6 troughs. The unit contains several non-motorized trails including the Pack Creek, Medicine Lake, Hells Canyon, South Mountain, Doe Canyon, Pole Canyon, and Carpenter Basin trails. There are no motorized trails within the unit. The area contains a few unauthorized motorized routes that have been closed and are naturally reclaiming.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High in the upper and mid level elevations. Moderate in the lower elevations where treatments have occurred

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude and the ability to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are possible. The northern boundary of the unit is the La Sal Pass Road which is relatively heavily used and is popular for dispersed camping. Opportunities for solitude exist away from trails, roads and camping corridors. The Lackey Basin cherry stem road goes deep into the unit and impacts opportunity for solitude on the southern slopes of South Mountain.

2b. There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include peak bagging, hiking, backpacking, hunting, and winter recreation such as backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, and mountaineering. The steep, and rugged country in the higher elevations provide for opportunities for challenge and risk.

Rating

2a. Moderate in most of the area, with some of the upper elevations in the unit providing for high levels of solitude.

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes. True alpine ecosystem on the Colorado plateau is uncommon. Animals in the unit include Pika (scc), goshawks, golden eagle, black Rosie finch (scc), big game summer range, and the Virginias warbler. Several plant species of conservation concern are in the unit including the La Sal daisy, bakers oreoxix, la sal mountain ground sel, and east woods pediserta.

B. Glacial features including cirques and moraines. The only mountain range that was glaciated on the Colorado plateau. Second highest range in Utah.

c. No, there are NR eligible prehistoric and historic sites present in low density. About 10 % survey coverage. No exceptional values of National or regional significance that would enhance a wilderness experience.

d. No

e. No

f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. A large portion of the unit is located within the South Mountain IRA. The Lackey Basin Cherry stem runs deep into the unit on the southern slopes of South Mountain. Several relatively popular mountain bike trails are

located in the northern portion of the unit which would make management more difficult in those portions of the Unit.

Rating

5a. Moderate

San Juan County Evaluation

Central La Sals-west

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural throughout the unit. Non-native species are not evident on the landscape. Habitat type is primarily pinyon juniper, with extensive riparian areas along Dorry and Brumley Creek. Douglas firs occur in Dory Canyon. Some proposed SCC species include the Townsends Big Eared Bat, and the Astragalus Iselyi which can be found along Brumley Ridge. Some gambel oak is also present in the unit. This unit contains elk and deer winter range. Common riparian and upland animal communities are in this unit. Non-natives include some scattered cheat grass and crested wheat grass.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots. There are past vegetation treatments (chainings) all throughout the unit that occurred in the 1960's. The treatments are not currently readily apparent on the landscape, but there are remnant piles of scattered logs and roots and a lower density of pinion and juniper within the treatment. There are obvious cut stumps present in the southwest portion of the area from vegetation treatments in 2004.

1c. There is noticeable evidence of human activity that impacts the apparent naturalness in most areas. Range improvements include 3 troughs made of fiberglass and, 3 post and pole enclosures, one earthen stock pond, and a mile of barb wire fence. The unit contains Brumley Creek motorized trail, and motorized trail # 969. Evidence of many old closed roads are still apparent within the unit.

Rating

1a. High

1b. Moderate

1c. Low

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude are limited in this unit. The unit is adjacent to the La Sal Loop Road which is a paved scenic backway and is very popular throughout the entire year. The Brumley Creek motorized trail receives a fair amount of motorized use. Grazing management activities occur throughout the unit. A year round residence is located on a private inholding near the western boundary of the unit. The unit is adjacent to the Pack Creek subdivision along its southwest corner. Numerous residential structures are located on the subdivision.

2b. There are opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation such as hunting, hiking, rock climbing, and canyoneering.

Rating

2a. Low

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes, Astragalus esyi and Townsend's big eared bat

b. No

c. Yes, high density but low survey, lithic scatter, some eligible. No exceptional values. Presence of dinosaur bones.

D. No

e. No

f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics difficult in most areas. There are several short cherry stem roads within the unit. Three motorized trails run through the middle of the unit and divide the unit into smaller sections. Range management activities occur throughout the unit. One private Inholding is in the unit. The unit is adjacent to developed private land subdivisions. A decision to construct a new mountain bike trail within the unit has been signed. The entire unit is also managed as a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to protect the municipal watershed and the adjacent Pack Creek subdivision.

5a. Low

San Juan County Evaluation

Central La Sals-east

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. This unit contains diverse plant and animal communities. The upper elevations of the unit contain a unique tundra ecosystem. Habitats in this unit include spruce/ fir forest, gambel oak, sub alpine meadows, mixed conifer/ aspen forest, conifer forest, and Colorado plateau upland. Animals in the unit include Pika (proposed scc), goshawks, golden eagle, black Rosie finch (proposed scc), and the Virginias warbler. Introduced mountain goats use the high country of this unit. Several plant species of conservation concern including La Sal daisy, bakers oreoxix, la sal mountain ground sel, and east woods pediserta. Some animal species of conservation concern include Pika, and the black Rosie finch. Other wildlife include goshawks, golden eagle, big game summer range, and the Virginias warbler. Non-native species in the area include some of the Kentucky blue grass at lower elevations.

1b. Vegetation appears natural in this unit. There was some old timber salvage in the 80s, but the impacts are no longer apparent on the landscape.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity in this unit. Range improvements include 3.5 miles of barbed wire fence and one trough. Several non-motorized trails are within the unit including the Squaw Springs, Gold Basin, Tuk Trail and the Burlfriends trail. The Squaw Springs and Burlfriends trails are also open to mountain biking. A few unauthorized motorized routes that have been closed are present in the area and naturally reclaiming. Several small scale vertical structures are located within the unit including; a small radio tower, two snotel sites and a weather station. These structures are screened by trees and not generally noticeable. The weather station is small and above tree line and not substantially noticeable from within the unit. There is one recreational yurt under special use permit that is located along the edge of the unit during the winter months.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities for solitude are possible throughout the unit. The northern boundary is adjacent to the Geysers Pass road which is heavily used, and popular for dispersed camping. The town of Moab is visible from the higher portions of the unit. Although opportunities for solitude does exist away from roads, human activities can often be seen from within the unit.

2b. There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation such as peak bagging, hiking, backpacking, hunting, and non-motorized winter recreation such as backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, and mountaineering. Rock climbing and canyoneering opportunities also exist in the unit. The steep, and rugged country in the higher elevations provide opportunities for challenge and risk.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes, True alpine ecosystem on the Colorado plateau is uncommon.

b. Yes, Glacial features including cirques and moraines. The only mountain range that was glaciated on the Colorado plateau. Rock Glaciers have been studied in the area. Is the highest peak outside the Uinta's. Second highest range in Utah. Brumley creek arch and waterfall.

c. Yes, eligible properties. Low survey. Prehistoric and historic sites that are eligible are in the area. Historic abandoned mines and structures in the Dory area.

d. Yes, Mount Peal RNA. alpine ecosystem.

e. Yes, Headwaters of mill creek important for municipal w2a. Moderate

2b. Highater supply.

f. Yes, Glacial features and geology of the area have been focus of university study.

5 - Manageability

Presence and extent of other uses and management considerations affects isolated spots and makes management to preserve the areas wilderness characteristics possible throughout the area. Four short cherry stem roads occur in the unit along the edges. The Mount Peale Research Natural Area (RNA) is located in the area surrounding Mount Peale. The RNA was established to protect the unique alpine ecosystem in the high elevations around the peaks. Almost the entire unit is located within the Mount Peale IRA. Several authorized outfitter and guides operate in the unit including a permit for a yurt. All permitted uses would be compatible with managing the area for its wilderness character.

Rating

5a. High

San Juan County Evaluation

Mill Creek Canyon - South (BLM WSA)

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural in this unit with no non-native species on the landscape. Vegetation communities are primarily Pinyon/Juniper Woodlands and Mountain brush.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in isolated spots. There are old chaining's and recent vegetation treatments (mastication) in the unit. Over time the treatments will become less apparent.

1c. There is noticeable evidence of human activity. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There are old mining exploration scars, and a ditchline associated with the South Mesa Reservoir. Range improvements include 1 pond and .8 miles of barbed wire fence.

Rating

1a. High

1b. Moderate

1c. Low

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Human activity is common in the area which limits the opportunities for solitude. This unit is adjacent to developed private property with agricultural fields to the southwest. There is a utility line that receives regular maintenance along the eastern boundary.

2b. Existing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited by the size. There are some day hiking opportunities, and hunting.

Rating

2a. Low

2b. Low

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

- a. No
- b. No
- c. No, Few NR eligible sites present. No exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience.
- d. No
- e. No
- f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or management considerations occurs across most of the area making it difficult to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics. The unit is a small area and is adjacent to developed private lands. A short section of the boundary is also adjacent to the BLM managed Mill Creek WSA.

Rating

5a. Low

San Juan County Evaluation

Roc Creek

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural in this unit with no non-native species in the unit. Vegetation community types include aspen and mixed conifer at higher elevations and Pinyon juniper at lower elevations with riparian vegetation in the Roc Creek Gorge.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There are no recent vegetation treatments in the unit.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There are some old mining impacts such as access roads, adits, etc. on the rim of Roc Creek Gorge. Range improvements include 12 stock ponds, 4 springs, and about 1/4 mile of fence. The Roc Creek Gorge itself has no developments or signs of human activity.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. Moderate for the uplands, High within Roc Creek Gorge

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. There is a common feeling of being alone and remote to civilization in this unit. Buckeye Reservoir and a campground are located to the south of the unit but they are not visible. A ranch house and some agricultural fields are located to the north but are also not visible from most of the unit. Human activities are rare within the unit as access to the area is difficult.

2b. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation include day hiking, backpacking, outstanding big game hunting, and some opportunities for fishing are available in Roc Creek. The unit contains the Roc Creek non-motorized trail that is little used.

Rating

2a. High

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

- a. No
- b. Deep canyon with Perennial stream,
- c. No, few sites known in area. Less than 10% survey. No exceptional values of national or regional significance that would enhance a wilderness experience.
- d. No
- e. Fishery and perennial stream
- f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and management considerations affects isolated spots and makes management to preserve the areas wilderness characteristics possible throughout the area. The area is in a remote part of the forest and adjacent to the Sewumup BLM WSA in Colorado. Most of the area is within the Roc Creek IRA. Access to some of the unit is difficult as it is surrounded by private lands in some areas.

Rating

5a. High

San Juan County Evaluation

Mill Creek Canyon - North (BLM WSA)

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural with no non-native species evident. Vegetation types include primarily Pinyon/Juniper Woodlands with some Ponderosa Pine. There are large areas of bare slickrock in the unit.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There are no recent vegetation treatments.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. There is a utility line in the south eastern corner of the unit.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are also possible due to the small size of the unit. This unit is adjacent to developed private property on the south with a house on the property. The unit is also adjacent to the heavily used Sand Flats Road on the east and a BLM WSA on the west.

2b. There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include day hiking and hunting. The canyons, towers and boulders have potential for bouldering and rock climbing. There are no trails or other facilities in this unit.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. No

b. Yes, Interesting rock fins and towers

- c. No, area is unsurveyed. No Known sites. Moderate potential for NR eligible sites to be present. No exceptional values that would enhance the wilderness experience
- d. No
- e. No
- f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the area. This is a small area that is adjacent to developed private land and utility lines. It is also adjacent to a small portion of the Mill Creek WSA.

Rating

5a. Moderate when viewed in context with the adjacent BLM Mill Creek WSA.

San Juan County Evaluation

North La Sal Peaks

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and Animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not evident. This unit contains diverse plant and animal communities. The upper elevations of the unit contain a unique tundra ecosystem. Habitats in this unit include spruce/ fir forest, gambel oak, sub alpine meadows, mixed conifer/ aspen forest, conifer forest, and Colorado plateau upland. Animals in the unit include Pika (proposed scc), goshawks, golden eagle, black Rosie finch (proposed scc), and the Virginias warbler. Introduced mountain goats use the high country of this unit. The unit contains several proposed plant species of conservation concern including La Sal daisy, bakers oreoxix, la sal mountain ground sel, and east woods pediserta. Other wildlife include goshawks, golden eagle, and the Virginias warbler. The unti contains big game summer range.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There are some recent vegetation treatments along the northern portion of the boundary but they were designed to mimic natural disturbances and appear natural.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. Range improvements include stock tanks made of steel and earthen reservoirs. There are also 17 troughs and some are very apparent due to large exclosures built to protect the spring areas. In addition, there are 6 stock ponds, all on Boren Mesa and are large in open areas with bull thistle around them. There is about 9 miles of fence within the unit. There are several heavily used authorized mountain bike trails in the unit including the Whole Enchilada, Moonlight Meadows and Clark Lake Trails. Some unauthorized motorized routes also exist in the unit. There is one recreational yurt under special use permit that operates year round. Areas that were heavily influenced by human activities were removed from the unit including the mining developments around Miners Basin and the Bald Mesa Communication Site.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. Moderate

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are possible as well. This unit is adjacent to developed private property (Willow Basin) on the north,

with numerous residential structures and access roads. This unit is also adjacent to the heavily used and paved La Sal Loop Road and Gateway Roads. There are several cherry stems that are located deep within the unit (Miners Basin, Beaver Creek, Willow Basin) which make obtaining solitude difficult around the cherry stem roads. There are also heavily used mountain bike trails in the area that see hundreds of riders a day during the summer and fall seasons. This unit is adjacent to the popular developed campgrounds at Warner Lake and Oowah Lakes. Located at the center of the unit are mining claims and undeveloped private property.

2b. There are opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include peak bagging (Mount Waas is a county highpoint), hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing on small lakes, and winter recreation that include backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, and mountaineering. The only back country lake in the La Sals is located in the unit (Clark Lake) which provides fishing opportunities. The steep, and rugged country in the higher elevations provide opportunities for challenge and risk.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. High

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes, Species of Conservation Concern include Pika, and black Rosie finch. Other wildlife in the unit include goshawks, golden eagle, big game summer range, and the Virginias warbler. Plant Species of Conservation Concern include the La Sal daisy, bakers oreoxix, la sal mountain ground sel, and east woods pediserta.

b. Alpine Tundra, glaciated features (moraines and cirques)

c. Yes, The Miners Basin Town site is of local and regional significance. Other sites (prehistoric mostly) NR eligible sites are also present in low density. Probably less than 5% survey coverage.

d. No

e. No

f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or management considerations occurs across most of the area making it difficult to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics. There are several long cherry stems that dissect the unit, mining claims, adjacent private property and adjacent developments such as communication sites. This area contains popular and heavily used mountain bike trails in the southern portion of the unit. Most of the area is within the Horse Mountain Manns Peak IRA.

Rating

5a. Moderate in portions in the high peaks away from cherrystem roads and mining impacts.
Low in the rest of the unit.

San Juan County Evaluation

Beaver Creek

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. Plant and animal communities appear natural. Non-native species are not readily evident on the landscape. Non-native species include cheat grass, and crested wheatgrass. Vegetation communities in the unit include mostly Pinion Juniper with scattered ponderosa and aspen woodland types. Aspen, cottonwood and alder are located in the riparian areas along Beaver Creek. Animals in the area include Deer and elk, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and Saw-whet owl. The unit contains big game winter range.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in isolated spots. Some chaining has occurred in the past along the northern edge, but it has naturally reclaimed. Areas of obvious treatment were removed from the unit.

1.c Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. Range Improvements include 13 ponds and 2.3 miles of fence. All reservoirs/stock ponds in the unit are located on the top of the mesas in pinyon/juniper woodlands and are not visible or noticeable to most visitors. There is very little change to the overall landscape from the reservoirs/stock ponds or other range developments

Rating

1a. High

1b. Moderate

1c. Moderate on mesa tops, High in the canyon bottom.

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area. The area is fairly small, but it is adjacent to the BLM Beaver Creek Natural Area.

2b. There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation which include day hiking, backpacking, and hunting when combined with BLM lands. This unit is undeveloped with no trails. There are no facilities or user controls.

Rating

2a. Moderate

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

- a. Yes, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and sawett owl
- b. No
- c. No, There are NR eligible prehistoric sites (lithic scatters) present in low density. Perhaps 20 % survey coverage. No exceptional values.
- d. No
- e. No
- f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or other management considerations is scattered and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible throughout much of the area. The unit is small, but it is adjacent to the much larger BLM Beaver Creek Natural Area.

Rating

5a. Moderate

San Juan County Evaluation

Mary Jane Canyon (BLM Natural Area)

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. The composition of plant and animal communities appears natural. The vegetation in the unit is primarily pinyon juniper with some ponderosa pine, aspen and oak stands. Shrublands, gambel oak, and ponderosa pine woodlands are also located within the unit. Animal species in the unit include deer, elk, bear, juniper titmouse, Clarks nutcracker, and mature pinion juniper bird species. This unit is also a winter range for big game. Non-native species include scattered cheat grass, but mostly appears natural.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. There has been some mastication treatments that occurred within the last 5 years, but it appears mostly natural on the landscape. Some chaining has occurred in the north end in the 1960's, but are not evident to the average visitor.

1c. There is little evidence of human activity. The presence of improvements does not detract from apparent naturalness. There are no trails in the unit. 4 earthen dams are present but are fairly naturalized and screened. Old mining exploration roads are present in the southwestern corner.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. Opportunities to feel alone are possible in much of the area, though signs of civilization are possible. The southern boundary is defined by the paved Gateway road which receives relatively high levels of use and is popular for dispersed camping. When away from the motorized road, opportunities for solitude exist. Some range management activities occur about one month out of the year.

2b. Any existing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are poor, but include day hiking, canyoneering, and hunting. This unit is undeveloped with no trails. This unit does not have facilities or user controls.

Rating

2a. Moderate (due to road)

2b. Low

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. No

b. No

c. Yes, very little survey coverage. Low density of documented sites, but all are eligible. Andy Swanson homestead site.

d. No

e. No

f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or management considerations occurs across most of the area making it difficult to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics. This small size of the unit would make managing the area for wilderness character difficult but when viewed in context with adjacent BLM natural areas it would be possible. The unit is adjacent to the BLM natural area on the northwest. Grazing management activities occur in the unit. The southern half of the unit is within a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fire management area.

Rating

5a. Low

San Juan County Evaluation

Beaver Creek (BLM Natural Area) Polar Mesa

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. The composition of plant and animal communities appears natural in most areas. The dominant vegetation is ponderosa pine and pinion juniper with some scattered sage sagebrush on the mesa top. This area is important elk winter range. Common forest species include warblers, elk, bear, and deer. Non-native species include crested wheat grass, and cheat grass. Alfalfa and crested wheat grass were planted in the south.

1b. Vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots. There was plowing and seeding in the southern portion of the unit which is apparent.

1c. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in most areas. The area has a high level of human disturbance. The unit contains old exploration roads, old mining equipment and old milled timber structures, waste rock piles, access and loading roads, and dump sites. All of these are related to the patented mill site. There is a big earthen stock pond for range management in the unit, as well as contour plowing for watershed improvements. Range Improvements include 4 stock ponds and a couple hundred feet of fence off the road.

Rating

1a. Moderate

1b. Moderate

1c. Low

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. There are no opportunities for feeling alone in this unit. Due to the small size of unit, you are close to roads anywhere you go in the unit. Range management activities occur only once every 4 years, but the small section below the rim is used annually. Firewood gathering is popular in May through November in the area. The popular Kokopelli mountain bike trail is adjacent to the unit.

2b. Any existing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are poor. There are no trails. Any opportunities include day hiking, and viewing historic mining. Some bear and lion hunting occur in the area with the use of ATV's.

Rating

- 2a. No
- 2b. Low

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

- 4a. Yes, Peregrine falcon (Forest sensitive species), Utah Wildlife action plan and includes presence and habitat.
- 4b. No
- 4c. Yes, Eligible Polar mesa cave is present and significant. Significant because it is an alcove site with 6k years of deposits. High quality. Other eligible prehistoric and historic sites.
- 4d. No
- 4e. No
- 4f. No

5 - Manageability

The presence and extent of other uses and/or management considerations in the area is pervasive making it impossible to manage the majority of the area to preserve wilderness characteristics. Numerous cherry stem roads dissect the polygon in three places. Private property and roads surround the area. Range activities include motorized management of a range allotment. No IRA's are located within the unit. This unit is adjacent to BLM natural area lands that have been determined to have wilderness character. Many of the roads are impassable. There are no active mining claims in the unit

- Rating
- 5a. No

San Juan County Evaluation

Fisher Mesa

Forest Service Evaluation

1 - Apparent Naturalness

1a. The composition of plant and animal species appear natural. Vegetation in this unit is mostly pinyon juniper with scattered ponderosa pine, aspen and woodland types. Aspen, cottonwood and alder are located in riparian areas. This unit is located in elk and deer winter range. Animal communities in this unit include golden eagles, peregrine falcons, saw whet owl. Crested wheatgrass is present in this unit but appears natural.

1b. Vegetation appears natural. Chaining has occurred in the past along the eastern edge, but is fairly naturalized.

1c. There is little to no evidence of human activity. Prevalence of improvements is scattered throughout the unit. There are 8 resevoirs/stock tanks which are all located on top of mesa in pinon juniper woodlands. They are not visible or noticeable to most visitors. They were constructed from native soils and dug out. There is also one trough, and barbed wire fencing which total to approximately 2 miles. There are also 3 range/research exclosures in the area. There is a stock driveway in the unit which is a very steep route. There are a few user created routes, but they are not prevalent on the landscape. The non-motorized Fisher Mesa trail is located in the unit. There is an exploratory drill hole in the western portion of the area, but it was reclaimed in 1983.

Rating

1a. High

1b. High

1c. High

2 - Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

2a. There is little opportunity of feeling alone in this unit. You can hear or see the Gateway road from most of the unit. This road is heavily used. From the mesa tops you can see irrigated ranch land below on private property. There is a mountain bike trail in this unit but it is not heavily used. This unit contains an allotment that is used annually in the spring and fall. Most of the use in this unit is on the mesa, so opportunity for solitude is possible in the canyons and away from roads. Dispersed camping occurs on the road in the east. Steep canyons in the unit can provide some solitude by shielding the user from the sights and sounds of the adjacent roads.

2b. There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation such as hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, hunting (elk, deer, bear, turkey).

Rating

2a. Low

2b. Moderate

4-Unique Features: a. wildlife/plant ecosystems b. outstanding landscape features c. Historic/cultural d. RNA's e. watershed features f. education/scientific

a. Yes, peregrine falcon and golden eagle habitat (utah wildlife action plan).

b. Yes, Bull canyon overlook-edge of a deep canyon, dinosaur tracks. Distinct scenic attractiveness.

c. No, less than 10% have been surveyed, but at least 12 known sites, and some are eligible. Primarily lithic scatter. Dinosaur tracks three toed, present, high quality and good example.

d. No

e. No

f. Dinosaur tracks

5 - Manageability

There are several cherry stem roads in the unit. The Fisher Mesa non-motorized trail is open to mountain bike use. Range management activities occur with motorized/mechanized tools and transport. Approximately 30% of the unit is in a WUI management zone. The western portion of the unit is adjacent to a BLM natural area.

Rating

5a. Low

San Juan County Evaluation