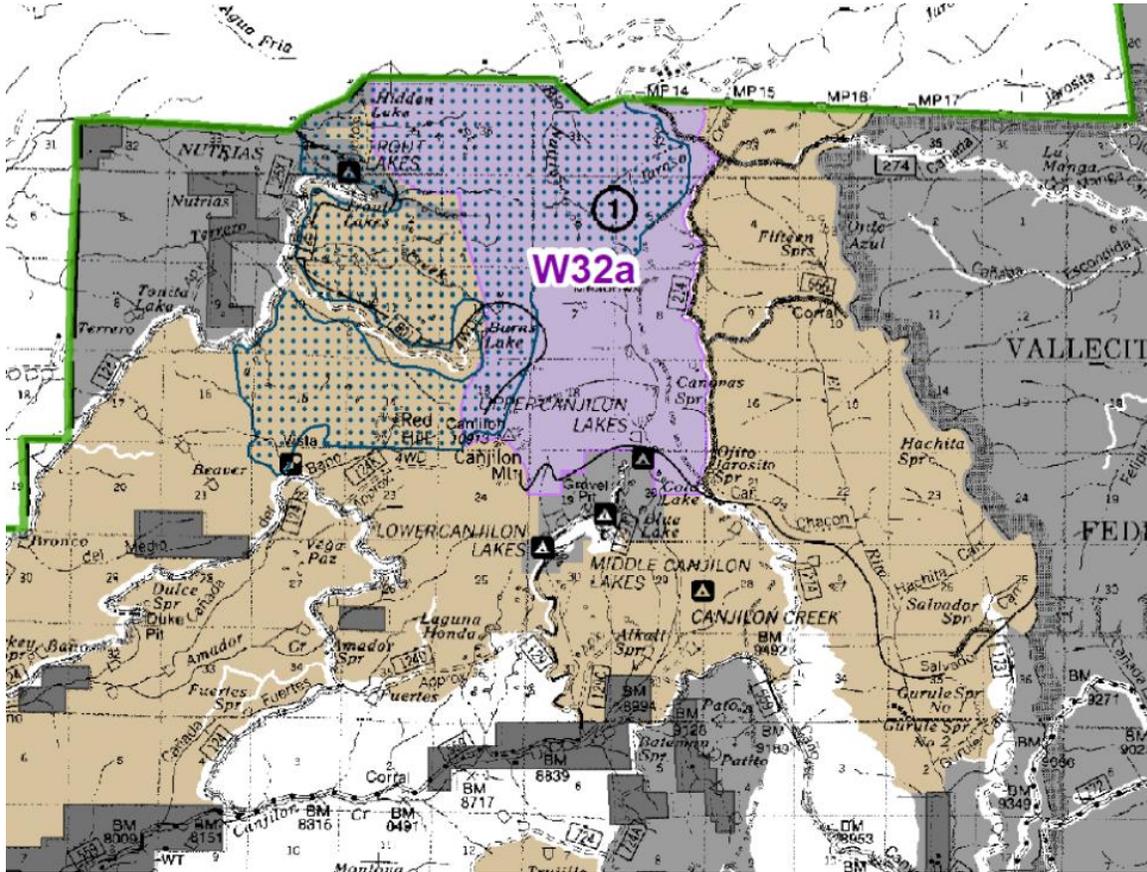


Canjilon and El Rito Ranger Districts

Canjilon Mountain, Upper Canjilon-Upper El Rito Watersheds

Suggested Evaluation Determination: Most of this area does not have wilderness character; however, one portion (labeled W32a see map below) does have wilderness character.



If a wilderness characteristic is not addressed in the following rationale, that characteristic is not determined to be found in the evaluated area, except for size. If size is not addressed, the area is determined to be 5,000 acres or more per the [wilderness criteria](#). The five wilderness characteristics are: (1) apparent naturalness; (2) opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation; (3) size; (4) ecological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values; and (5) manageability of wilderness characteristics.

Apparent Naturalness

Most of the Canjilon Mountain, Upper Canjilon-Upper El Rito Watersheds evaluated area lacks apparent naturalness, because of visible impact from past thinning projects, such as the Montoya and US 84 thinning project, visually apparent logging roads from past timber activities, and visual evidence of past mining activities. Numerous range and wildlife improvements, such as spring developments, trick tanks, stock tanks, fish barriers, and corrals, are scattered throughout this area and detract from a natural landscape.

Canjilon Lakes and Creek are the main water sources for the Canjilon community. Being the main water source, there is a constructed diversion with road access for maintenance from the lakes to the village of Canjilon. The water is also stored in a constructed water tower within the evaluated area. These structures and facilities detract from the apparent naturalness of the area. In addition to water use infrastructure, constructed recreation sites consisting of hardened campsites, fishing piers, parking areas, and day use areas are located at both Canjilon and Trout Lakes.

Portion W32a is determined to have apparent naturalness based on Canjilon Mountain itself and the beautiful meadows and wetlands found within the inventoried roadless area.¹ The areas also offer diverse landscapes, including steepness and rolling hills, in addition to the meadows and wetlands. Few improvements from present or past activities in W32a detract from apparent naturalness and the area offers a pristine setting.

Solitude or Unconfined Recreation

The portions of this evaluated area determined not to have wilderness characteristics offer limited opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation, because it is already a high use recreation area for the communities of Canjilon, Abiquiu, Española, and Tierra Amarilla. This is especially true around the highly used developed recreation sites in and around Trout Lakes and Canjilon Lakes. The access roads to these lakes are continually used during the summer by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and motor vehicles, as well as in the winter by snowmobiles. This evaluated area is also highly popular for driving for pleasure, scenic driving (including leaf peeping), and dispersed camping (including car camping). In addition, the sound impact from snowmobiling in the winter can be pervasive in the Canjilon Mountain and southwestern portions of this evaluated area.

W32a is mostly within an inventoried roadless area, where there is only one multi-use trail (including mountain bikes). This area offers opportunities for both solitude and unconfined recreation, based on setting, location, and current use levels.

Outstanding Values

An historic lookout within the evaluated area is determined not to have wilderness characteristics. Rio Grande cutthroat trout populations also found in streams throughout this evaluated area.

Manageability

It would be difficult to manage most of this evaluated area to preserve wilderness character, because of current multi-year and multi-agency approved restoration projects and established motorized access and motorized or use of mechanized equipment for the maintenance of range and wildlife improvements, such as spring developments, trick tanks, stock tanks, fish barriers, and corrals scattered throughout this evaluated area.

Given that portions of this evaluated area serve as Canjilon's main water source, maintenance of the infrastructure that supplies the village with its water would also impact the manageability of

¹ The definition of an inventoried roadless area for the [2001 Roadless Rule](#) included: undeveloped areas typically exceeding 5,000 acres that met the minimum criteria for wilderness consideration under the Wilderness Act and that were inventoried during the Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) process.

its wilderness characteristics. Additionally, portions of the evaluated area are within the wildland urban interface (WUI) for the village of Canjilon, where fire suppression efforts would be a priority to protect lives and property.

Other considerations that may affect the manageability of wilderness character in this area include long established traditional and cultural uses that consist of piñon picking and fuelwood harvesting.

W32a is within an inventoried roadless area, which offers opportunities and lends itself to the management of wilderness characteristics, due to the lack of roads, infrastructure, and minimal maintenance needs within the area.