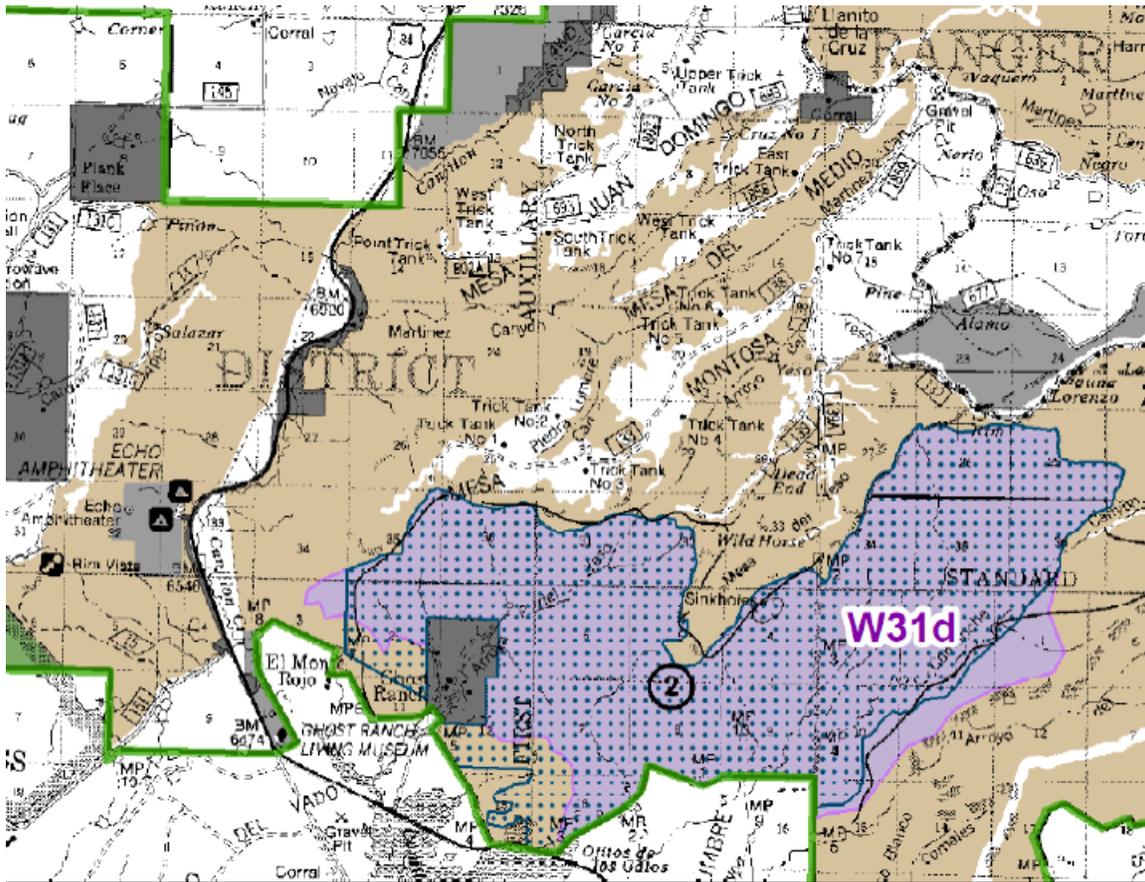


Canjilon and El Rito Ranger Districts

Arroyo Seco Watershed

Suggested Evaluation Determination: Most of this evaluated area does not have wilderness character; however, one portion (labeled W31d see 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 Arroyo Seco Watershed evaluated area lacks apparent naturalness, because of visible impacts from past thinning projects, past and current large landscape scale brush hogging projects, historic mining activities, and logging roads from past timber activities that are visually apparent across the landscape. This evaluated area also has several historic and current flagstone quarries, where collection is performed through mechanized means. This has left several scars and detracts from the apparent naturalness of the area. Numerous range and wildlife improvements, such as guzzlers, spring developments, trick tanks, stock tanks, pit tank,

and corrals are also scattered throughout this area, detracting from its apparent naturalness and demonstrating evidence of human activity that is noticeable across the landscape. Lastly, a high concentration of invasive weeds within the area gives an unnatural appearance and results in a departure from natural conditions.

Portion W31d is determined to have apparent naturalness based on the outstanding geologic features of red and tan sandstone made famous by the artist, Georgia O'Keefe, found within the inventoried roadless area.¹ Minimal improvements and a diverse landscape, including steep rock formations and a vast desert setting, contribute to its apparent naturalness.

Solitude or Unconfined Recreation

Within W31d, established hiking and horseback trails that transverse the area starting from the Ghost Ranch are found. Given this evaluated area is also within an inventoried roadless area, it offers opportunities for both solitude and unconfined recreation, because of minimal roads and its remoteness.

Outstanding Values

Portion W31d has outstanding geologic features of red and tan sandstone made famous by the artist, Georgia O'Keefe. Rare plants are also found in the area, including Chacon milkvetch, Chama blazing star, and tufted sand verbena. Additionally, people travel to this evaluated area to collect fossils.

Manageability

It would be difficult to manage most of the Arroyo Seco Watershed to preserve wilderness character, because of current multi-year and multi-agency approved restoration projects and established (and often times required) motorized access and use of motorized or use of mechanized equipment for the maintenance of range and wildlife improvements, such as pit tanks, guzzlers, spring developments, trick tanks, stock tanks, and corrals scattered throughout this area.

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 osha (medicinal herb) gathering.

W31d 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.

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.