

South Slope High Country Potential Wilderness No. 401201 85,024 Acres

South Slope High Country potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne (32,546 acres) and Uintah (52,477 acres) Counties, Utah, about 27 air miles northwest of Vernal and 34 air miles north of Roosevelt. Access is available from Forest Roads 018 (Red Cloud Loop), 017 (Marsh Bench), 027 (Ashley-Twin Lakes Loop), 043 (Leidy Peak), 104 (Mosby Mountain), 296 (Blanchett Park), 117 (Elkhorn Loop) and 110 (West Fork Whiterocks). Excluded corridors in the area provide access along Forest Road 296 for 1.25 miles, 110 for 7 miles, and 459 for 2.25 miles, and along Forest Road 109 (West Fork Trailhead) and two unclassified roads in the West Fork Whiterocks drainage in a 1.5 by 3.0 mile area.



Vicinity Map

Physical and Biological Descriptions: Elevations range from 6,000 feet at Paradise Park to 10,500 feet in the north. Along the highest elevations are gentle to moderate sloped alpine bollies covered with bare rock, lichens, and alpine forbs and grasses. These uplands are above the walls of glacially formed cirques which surround basin lakes, ponds, and wet depressions at the headwaters of south flowing streams. Forested areas along the moraines between creeks are covered by lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir. Long meadows follow the streams through the valley bottoms, interrupted by willows, boulders and areas with Engelmann spruce. Fire occurrence is moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area.

The area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species. The streams in the area contain habitat for wild Colorado River cutthroat trout. Brook trout thrive in the many streams and lakes.

Existing Activities: The area is heavily used for summer and fall recreation. Fifteen trails (018, 026, 039, 040, 041, 047, 049, 050, 051, 075, 124, 129, 130, 131, and 133) are located within the potential wilderness area and provide access to lakes and streams in the area and to the High Uintas Wilderness. The area is also managed for wildlife and trout habitat, and for livestock grazing.

Surroundings: The potential wilderness area northwestern boundary is the High Uintas Wilderness, and the area is adjacent to North Slope High County potential wilderness area on the north. Ashley Gorge and Lower Dry Fork East potential wilderness areas are separated from the area by road corridors and roaded areas along the east and south. Lower Dry Fork West, Lower Whiterocks, and High Uintas B potential wilderness areas each have short segments of connecting boundaries on the south and west, while the rest of the southern and western boundaries are along roaded areas of the forest.

Developed recreation areas close to the boundary are Hacking Lake Campground on the north, Paradise Park Campground on the south, Chepeta Lake Trailhead at the end of and within Forest Road 110 excluded road corridor, and West Fork Trailhead within an excluded area along Forest Road 109.

Dams, water inlet and outlet facilities, and canals north of Chepeta Lake and south of Wigwam Lake, Papoose Lake, and Moccasin Lake are excluded from the area.

Timber salvaged areas south of Chepeta Lake are excluded from the potential wilderness area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Brook trout and other stocked fish species in aquatic systems, livestock grazing, and areas around water impoundments have slightly reduced natural integrity.

Undeveloped Character: The undeveloped character has been moderately affected by water developments and fences for livestock grazing, and by dams, canals, and reservoirs. Additionally, there are sight and sound near the excluded road corridors and motorized trails.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Encounters with other visitors are most likely along the southern boundary, near lakes, and along excluded road corridors. However, remoteness and solitude can be found in much of the area. There are several desirable trails and destinations for non-motorized recreation, and many water features.

Special Features: None have been identified.

Manageability: The area has a common boundary with the High Uintas Wilderness, and other potential wilderness. About half of the remaining boundary would be easy to locate on the ground. Excluded corridors and areas isolate many of the nonconforming uses. Manageability could be improved by combining the area with the North Slope High Country potential wilderness area and adjusting other boundaries.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 11,623 acres (13 percent) primitive, 59,806 acres (70 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 4698 acres (6 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 8,899 acres (11 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Most of the excluded roads are open to full size vehicle and ATV travel and two OHV trails are available. Varied modes of transport are used to access destination lakes and streams for fishing, hunting, and camping. Few activities occur off of the main trails due to the steep terrain.

The entire potential wilderness area is open to cross country travel by motorized over-snow vehicles when snow is at least 12" deep. Most snowmobiling occurs within the Blanchett Park area, Reader Creek drainage, and Upper Whiterocks drainage. The Utah Snowmobile Association considers the areas open to snowmobiling as important for cross-country snowmobiling.

Wildlife: Utah Division of Wildlife Management (UDWR) plans on using rotenone to eradicate non-native trout in several drainages of South Slope High Country potential wilderness area as part of the Colorado River cutthroat trout recovery effort, and temporary and permanent fish barriers would be constructed using mechanical means. No wildlife habitat improvement projects are currently planned for this area.

Water: Two canals and four lakes within the potential wilderness area are under special use permit to irrigation companies. The special use permits allow for motorized access for maintenance of water works associated with the canals and lakes on a case-by-case basis.

Livestock Grazing: Part of Mosby Mountain allotment and Dry Fork allotment are in the area. Marsh Peak also covers part of the area but is currently vacant. The grazing permit currently allows motorized access as required for maintenance of the small number of grazing developments.

Timber: The area had 34,372 acres of suitable timber.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential and the probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: Sheep camps, cairns and corrals dating from the 1880s through 1950s are present in the Chepeta Lake basin. The historic Deadman Cabin is located in the upper headwaters of Upper Dry Fork in Lightening Park and was used as part of early timber activities on the eastern side of the High Uintas. Historic roads are located in Upper Whiterocks and East Fork Whiterocks. These roads were used during construction of historic dams.

Evidence of Archaic, Fremont and late prehistoric uses are present in the Deadman Lake and Chepeta Lake areas. These areas provide some of the best-preserved features on the east side of the High Uintas. Several of these sites are consider eligible for National Register listing.

Land Use Authorizations: An outfitter/guide permit for the general South Slope High County area has been issued to J/L Ranch.

Other concerns: Uintah County has provided the Forest Service with a map of a road right-of-way under RS 2477 for an extension of excluded Forest Road 027 traversing northwest to near Goose Lakes and then northeast through Horseshoe Park, Deer Park and Pat Carroll Park to a junction with Forest Road 043 (Leidy Peak). There is no existing Forest Service or county process to determine the validity of these RS2477 claims, and these claims remain invalidated to date.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: About 80 percent of the area is part of the Western High Uintas ecological subsection, and has Alpine Moraine and Uinta Bollie landtype associations. The remainder is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecosystem subsection and has Trout Slope Landtype Association. The area has potential habitat for wolverine. The area has ecological characteristics similar to those in the High Uintas Wilderness, and would not add to the ecological diversity of the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas may be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area has natural screening, primitive opportunities, and many trails.

Public Input: Local government groups site existing domestic and agricultural water uses, potential water sources and water storage, access to water storage, dispersed recreation uses, and needs for these from a growing local population as reasons for not recommending the area for wilderness designation. The also discussed the need for timber and grazing, and effects to grazing permittees, as well as specifically increasing demands for roaded and motorized backcountry recreation opportunities.

Utah Environmental Congress recommends the area be combined with North Slope High Country and Roadshed potential wilderness areas to create a larger and more diverse area which they believe would help relieve pressure on the High Uintas Wilderness lakes, lake basins, and river corridors.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability: Capability is high, with minor effects from livestock grazing and motorized use on excluded routes and near the southern boundary. There are many opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability could be improved from boundary adjustments and by combining the area with North Slope High Country potential wilderness area.

Availability: Availability is moderate based on permitted allotment activities, the acreage generally suitable for timber harvest, wildlife management objectives, and trails designated for ATV use.

Need is moderate, based on the area's potential contribution to wilderness recreational opportunities. The area would add little to the ecological diversity of the NWPS.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401201	South Slope High Country	85,024	High	Moderate	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

**Dyer Mountain
Potential Wilderness No. 401202
10,185 Acres**

The most northern part of Dyer Mountain potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901. The southern part was not evaluated in 1983.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: Dyer Mountain potential wilderness area is located in Uintah County, Utah, about 14 air miles south of Dutch John, and 21 air miles north of Vernal. Forest Road 020 (East Park) and Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop) provide access to the area. Vehicle access is also available from excluded corridors along Forest Road 249 (Kane Hollow) for 2.5 miles, along 035 (Anderson Creek) for 2.5 miles, along 251 (Loco Creek) for 1.5 miles, and along 252 (Parson City Spring) for .25 miles.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 8,100 feet along the southern boundary of the area to 10,248 feet at the top of Dyer Mountain. The area consists of gently rolling lands in the northern portion of the area, and moderately steep side slopes associated with Dyer Mountain and canyon side slopes of Anderson and Loco Creeks in the west and south. Vegetative cover is mostly conifer forests, 80 percent of which have a lodgepole pine overstory. Wetter sites support Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Sedge-grass communities cover about five percent of the area. Aspen, sedge-bluegrass, and wet meadow habitat are found along the bottom of Anderson and Loco Creeks. Fire occurrence is moderate to moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area.

The area provides habitat for the Forest Service Sensitive plant *Cypripedium fasciculatum*.

A variety of wildlife species inhabit and frequent the area. Brook and rainbow trout thrive in Big Brush, Anderson, and Loco Creeks.

Existing Activities: Dispersed camping, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and other activities are most common on the gentle terrain in the north, along perimeter roads, and on the summer and fall trails in the area. Vegetation is mostly managed for wildlife habitat and livestock grazing.

Surroundings: Nearby potential wilderness areas are Roadshed about one mile to the north, Grizzly Ridge about .75 miles to the east, Ashley Gorge about .25 miles to the west, and Brush Creek, separated from the area by a road corridor on the south.

Iron Springs Campground, Oaks Park Reservoir, and Oaks Park Campground and Summer Home Area are near the southern and western boundaries. East Park Reservoir and Campground are within 0.75 miles of the northeastern boundary of the area. Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop Scenic Backway) corridor is the southern boundary.



Vicinity Map

The historic Dyer Mountain/Parson City Copper Mining District is located within patented private lands along the southeastern boundary of the potential wilderness area, and consists of access roads, open pits, a smelter structure and old cabin structures. Private lands at the terminus of Forest Road 035 in Anderson Creek have an historic copper smelter and other structures.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Grazing, weeds, and fish stocking have slightly altered the integrity of native communities.

Undeveloped Character: The area is affected slightly by the two trails open to ATV travel, snowmobile travel along the boundaries, visible use at dispersed campsites, minor grazing developments, and unclassified roads.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Topographic features do provide areas with solitude; however current management has resulted in motorized ROS classes across the entire area. Roads, campgrounds, and activities along the boundary affect solitude with sights, sounds, and smells along the edge and in open areas in the interior.

Special Features: Early mining at Dyer Mountain could provide opportunities for study.

Manageability: Some boundary locations are difficult to locate, and contribute to issues with nonconforming uses. With boundary adjustments and/or by combining the area with adjacent potential wilderness area the area could be more manageable.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 3,359 acres (33 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized and 6,826 acres (67 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Forest ATV trails 009 and 070 cross through the northern portion of the potential wilderness area, and most routes along the perimeter and in corridors are open to ATV travel. Camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and other dispersed recreation takes place in the canyon bottoms of Big Brush, Anderson and Loco Creeks and on more gentle sloping terrain in the northern portion of the area. Very few dispersed recreation activities occur on the steep, heavily vegetated slopes of Dyer Mountain or the side slopes of Anderson Creek and Loco Creek, which make up the majority of the potential wilderness area.

The area is open to cross-country snowmobiling and has no trails. Some cross country snowmobiling occurs in canyon bottoms of Big Brush, Anderson and Loco Creeks and on more gentle sloping terrain in the northern portion of the area.

Wildlife: No projects are planned for the area.

Water: Water from the area supports livestock grazing.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of the Taylor Mountain and Lonesome Park allotments are in the area, and motorized access to water developments is allowed.

Timber: The area has 4,637 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: Early mining activity in the Uintas occurred in this area. The area has moderate value heritage resources associated with the roads supporting Dyer Mine. Most of the mining features are off-Forest on private lands.

Land Use Authorizations: No additional authorizations have been identified.

Other concerns: Two RS2477 road right-of-way assertions by Uintah County are within the potential wilderness area.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Dyer Mountain potential wilderness area is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecological subsection and has Trout Slope, Limestone Hills, Parks Plateau, and Stream Canyons landtype associations. Unoccupied habitat is present for lynx and wolverine. The area is ecologically similar to the High Uintas Wilderness, and would not add diversity to the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local governments consider the area to be most valuable if kept available for a full range of resource uses and activities, including recreation and possible additional recreation facilities near Uintah Basin communities, grazing, wood products, wildlife management, and a variety of vegetation treatments.

Utah Environmental Congress proposes that the area would be (exceptional) wilderness, and that it would provide secure habitat and connectivity of wilderness quality lands between the Ashley Gorge unit to the west and the High Uintas Extension Unit to the east and good options for solitude in the varied terrain.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, due to effects from livestock grazing, two-track roads, and trails for motorized travel. The area has little area where solitude and primitive recreation can be found. Boundary adjustments could improve manageability.

Availability is moderate based on the permitted livestock development access, the concentration of designated ATV trails, and the area’s open status for snowmobiling.

Need is low, because the area would add little to the ecological diversity within the NWPS and is unlikely to add recreational opportunities that would reduce pressure on other wilderness.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401202	Dyer Mountain	10,185	Moderate	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Grizzly Ridge Potential Wilderness No. 401203 11,467 Acres

The northern two-thirds of Grizzly Ridge potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901. The southern one-third was not evaluated in 1983.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Daggett (7,678 acres) and Uintah (3,789 acres), Counties, Utah, about 10 air miles south of the town of Dutch John, and 22 air miles north of Vernal. Access is available from US Highway 191 (Flaming Gorge National Scenic Byway), Forest Roads 020 (East Park), and from Forest Road 047 (Grizzly Ridge) and 062 (Cart Creek Cutoff) along .75 mile of excluded corridors within the area. One unclassified road and several ATV trails also cross the area.



Vicinity Map

Physical and Biological Descriptions: Elevations range from 7,500 feet in the south to 9,968 feet at the top of Grizzly Peak. Moderately steep to steep side slopes with large fields of boulders are found along north to south ridges.

The area as a whole has dense to moderately dense conifer with subalpine fir/spruce/grouse whortleberry as the dominant habitat type. Around 80 percent of the conifer-covered area has a seral lodgepole pine overstory, particularly on the more stony well drained slopes. Wetter sites in the swales support more Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Pockets of spruce and fir occur on sites having better soil moisture, particularly in the West Cart Creek and Francis Creek drainages. Aspen, Douglas-fir, sedge-bluegrass and wet meadow habitat are also found along the bottom of these two creeks. Sedge-grass communities occur on an estimated 5 percent of the area.

South of Grizzly Peak, the vegetation includes Douglas-fir with Oregon grape, aspen with snowberry, lodgepole with grouse whortleberry, and sagebrush-grass communities. There are several draws with a mosaic vegetative cover of aspen stands, conifer, and open meadows. Open parklands and wet meadows dominated by grasses and forbs occur along the eastern and western boundaries in the southern half of the area. Fire occurrence is moderate to moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area.

The area provides habitat for the Forest Service Sensitive plant species *Cypripedium fasciculatum*.

Many species of wildlife inhabit and frequent the area. Colorado River cutthroat trout currently do not exist in Little Brush Creek, but this stream is considered to be part of the secondary recovery area.

Existing Activities: The area is used for livestock grazing, and for recreation. Trailer camping, ATV riding, hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing are common activities.

Surroundings: Grizzly Ridge shares one mile of boundary with Roadshed potential wilderness area on the north. Dyer Mountain potential wilderness area is one to two miles east of the area, and Mount Lena potential wilderness area is about ½ mile east of the area.

US Highway 191 (Flaming Gorge/Uintas National Scenic Byway) is adjacent to and parallels the area's eastern boundary.

A short segment of the 69 kV power transmission line originating at Flaming Gorge Dam runs parallel to and outside of the very following the Highway 191. Grizzly Ridge Electronic Site is located at the end of Forest Road 057 (Ranger Peak) along the eastern boundary.

Deer Lodge Summer Home area, Grizzly Ridge dispersed summer recreation and winter sports area, and Red Springs Campground are located along the eastern boundary.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Grazing, weeds, and stocking of non-native fish in streams have moderately altered natural integrity and water quality.

Undeveloped Character: Developments and motorized uses in the area are minor but widespread. They include three trails within the area for ATV travel, cross-country travel by snowmobiles on gentler terrain, and one unclassified road and dispersed car-camping area. There are a few small grazing developments. Microwave and cell phone towers, and a power line located outside the area are visible from many points in the area.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Current recreation uses in the area include motorized travel on roads and trails. Solitude and remoteness are reduced near the boundaries by outside influences of roads, power lines, and other infrastructure. Challenging terrain is confined to small parts of area. Noise from snowmobile use outside the area interferes with solitude in the winter.

Special Features: None were identified.

Manageability: The eastern boundary is along Highway 191, which provides areas for transfer facilities and is easy to define, but also make conflicts more likely. About 80 percent of the remaining boundary follows identifiable terrain features. Two excluded road corridors off Highway 191 essentially dissect the area into three equal pieces by penetrating 35 and 50% across its width. Boundary modifications may address some manageability concerns if roads were closed and the area connected to adjacent potential wilderness areas.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 7,986 acres (69 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 3,481 acres (31 percent) roaded natural ROS classes. Camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, ATV riding, and horseback riding take place within the canyon bottoms of Little Brush, Francis Creeks, and West Cart Creek. Trailer camping occurs along Forest Road 547 (Round Park area) and along Forest Roads 047 and 468 (Grizzly Ridge dispersed recreation area), and Forest Road 062 (West Cart Creek area). ATV use occurs on Trails 025 and 028, along Forest Road 047 (Grizzly Ridge), along Forest Road 062 in the West Cart Creek drainage, and on Roads 547 and 548 in the Round Park area. Very few dispersed recreation activities occur on the steep, heavily vegetated and rocky slopes of the north/south trending ridge lines.

Although the entire potential wilderness area is open to cross country travel by motorized over-snow vehicles, this use mainly occurs along and within the eastern part of the potential wilderness area. Several snowmobile routes follow existing roads adjacent to the southeastern boundary.

Cross-country skiing and snow play activities take place in the Grizzly Ridge winter sports area and Francis Creek area along the eastern boundary. The Grizzly Ridge Yurt is located along the southern boundary of the area. Cross-country skiers regularly use the yurt facility. The yurt is also available for overnight use by hikers during summer and fall months.

Wildlife: Little Brush Creek is not currently occupied by Colorado River cutthroat trout. This stream is considered to be part of the secondary recovery area, and projects for species recovery are possible.

Water: Water from the area is used for livestock grazing and downstream agricultural and domestic uses.

Livestock Grazing: There are two vacant sheep allotments that cover portions of the potential wilderness area. Sheep grazing has occurred in the Bassett Springs area. Motorized access to allotment developments is allowed.

Timber: The area has 5,601 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: There are no known heritage resources in the area.

Land Use Authorizations: No additional authorizations were identified.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: The eastern two thirds of Grizzly Ridge area is part of the Diamond Mountain Highlands ecosystem subsection, while the western one third is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecosystem subsection. The area has Limestone Hills, Parks Plateau, Stream Canyons, and Trout Slope landtype associations, and potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area has vegetation and other components similar to those in the High Uintas Wilderness.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups commented that the area should be managed to provide for additional OHV trails and recreation development to support nearby community needs, and for timber, mining, grazing, and wildlife.

Utah Environmental Congress would like to see the northern half of Grizzly Ridge area combined with Roadshed and North Slope High Country potential wilderness areas under their "Uintas 5" wilderness proposal.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, with effects from livestock grazing and motorized use on open trails and the boundary, and very few opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by excluded road corridors, and existing motorized uses in the area and along the boundaries.

Availability is moderate based on permitted allotment activities, the acreage generally suitable for timber harvest, the area’s open status for cross-country snowmobile travel, and the trails designated for ATV use.

Need is low, because the area would add little ecological diversity to the NWPS and is unlikely to add recreational opportunities because it already receives heavy use.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401203	Grizzly Ridge	11,467	Moderate	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Mount Lena Potential Wilderness No. 401204 31,494 Acres

The Mount Lena potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 and a part of Pipe Creek/Lena Peak Roadless Area # 01006.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Daggett (20,321 acres) and Uintah (11,173 acres) Counties, Utah, about 9 air miles south of Dutch John, and 24 air miles northeast of Vernal. Access is available from US Highway 191 and Forest Road 048 (Diamond Mountain), and from excluded corridors along Forest Roads 254 (McKee Ridge), 253 (Gravel Pit), 171 (Headache), and 049 (Green Draw).

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 8,500 feet to 9,755 feet at the summit of Mount Lena. Plateau lands in the north are covered by ponderosa pine dominated forests, with bitterbrush, mountain big sagebrush and various grasses common in the understory. Along Cart Creek drainage the terrain is composed of slopes between 50 and 60 percent. Pinyon pine and juniper woodlands cover much of the slopes between extremely rocky areas. There are a few shrub, grass and forb species in the understory and small openings. Upper Cart Creek has a well defined riparian area and mixed ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and juniper on moderate slopes. Mixed conifer and aspen overstory with a tall shrub layer and herbaceous layer combine for high structural diversity within the Pipe Creek and Spruce Creek drainages.

Along the western boundary, the terrain is comprised of flat to gently rolling plateaus cut by a few, widely spaced, shallow drainage ways, and the open areas of East McKee Draw and Bowden Draw. Lodgepole pine with sedges or grouse whortleberry is the dominant cover along the western boundary. There are small amounts of Douglas-fir/snowberry and aspen/grass-sedge communities present. Sagebrush/grass communities are the dominant cover in East McKee Draw and Bowden Draw. The terrain along the eastern boundary is rolling and covered with sagebrush and grass communities with scattered clones of aspen, and wet meadow communities in the draws. Fire occurrence is moderate over most of the potential wilderness area.

A variety of wildlife species inhabit and frequent the area, including big game species, raptors, and passerines. Cart Creek is seasonally stocked with rainbow trout.

Existing Activities: The most northern part of the area is within the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. ATV riding on open trails, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing are popular recreational uses. Vegetation is managed by selective harvest and fire for big game habitat and for livestock grazing.



Vicinity Map

Surroundings: Mount Lena potential wilderness area borders Little Hole potential wilderness area along the northern boundary, and Roadshed and Grizzly Ridge potential wilderness areas are one-half to two miles to the west.

US Highway 191 (Flaming Gorge/Uintas National Scenic Byway) parallels the area's western boundary. Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Dam are about 2.25 miles from the northern boundary. Green Dale East Group Campground, Fire Fighters Memorial Campground, Red Springs Campground, Lodgepole Campground, and Deer Lodge Summer Home Area are along or near the western boundary.

Power transmission corridors border and cross into the area along the north and west, and buried gas/hydrocarbon pipelines parallel the northern and eastern boundary.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Non-native species, such as rainbow trout stocked in Cart Creek, and non-native plants, have slightly altered natural composition. Flaming Gorge Dam (outside the area), livestock watering ponds and spring developments, and livestock grazing have affected hydrologic systems.

Undeveloped Character: There are widely distributed modifications and uses which affect the area. Three of the four trails within the area are presently open to ATV's, and cross-country travel by over-snow vehicles is presently allowed, and there are numerous unclassified roads. The grazing permit currently allows motorized access to the numerous stock ponds, fences, and spring developments.

A power transmission line borders part of the western boundary and then crosses into the southern part of the area near the Diamond Mountain Road. Microwave and cellular phone towers outside the area at Grizzly Ridge Electronic site as well as power distribution lines are visible from many locations.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Developments along the scenic byway and Flaming Gorge Reservoir affect solitude with sights, sounds, and smells. Use on the trails is heavy to moderate, reducing opportunities for solitude. However, nearly half of the large core area provides nonmotorized settings where solitude can be found.

Special Features: The area has several inventoried historic sites and routes.

The Limber Flag Yurt is located in the most southern part of the area. The yurt is available for overnight use by hikers and ATV users during summer and fall months, and snowmobilers and skiers in winter.

Manageability: Just over half of the boundary can be located on the ground or follows section lines. The excluded (cherry stem) roads also lower manageability. There are facilities which allow for transfer. Boundary modifications could eliminate some areas of conflict.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 14,228 acres (45 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 13,840 acres (44 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 3,430 acres (11 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Three of the four trails within the area are presently open to ATV's. One of the four trails is open to snowmobiles. Some cross-country skiing also takes place within the three draws mentioned above. Cross-country skiers regularly use the Limber Flag Yurt facility.

Dispersed recreation activities rarely occur on the steep, heavily vegetated and rocky slopes of east/west ridges within the area. Although the entire potential wilderness area is open to cross country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles, most snowmobile use occurs in East McKee Draw, Bowden Draw, and Green Draw. One snowmobile trail is in the area, and extends from Forest Road 048 (Diamond Mountain) to the Limber Flag Yurt.

Wildlife: Summer and winter range for deer and elk are maintained in the area with active management. A project which includes timber harvest is scheduled for 2008.

Water: There are existing spring developments and ponds which support livestock grazing within the potential wilderness area. The area also contributes water to Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Livestock Grazing: East McKee Draw, Bowden Draw, Green Draws, and an area along the southern boundary have grazing use on allotments. Motorized access is allowed on roads to the numerous stock ponds, spring developments, and fences.

Timber: The area has 13,836 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential is low, and mineral potential is low. There are no existing mineral activities and no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: John Wesley Powell's Green River expedition visited this area. The historic Stringham Cabin, access road, and trail are located along the western boundary of the area.

Archaic, Fremont and late prehistoric sites have been found and inventoried along Pipe Creek and Cart Creek. Some of these sites are eligible for listing on the National Register.

Land Use Authorizations: An electrical distribution line crosses within the very southern portion of the area near the Diamond Mountain Road.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Mount Lena potential wilderness area is part of the Diamond Highlands ecosystem subsection, and has Greendale Plateau, Limestone Hills, Parks Plateau, Red Canyon, and Trout Slope landtype associations. There are small amounts of potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area has sagebrush-grassland and pinyon/juniper vegetation types that would add diversity to the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups comment that the area has the potential for a full range of multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, wildlife, and watersheds; and should be open to development to support recreation and resource needs of the growing local population.

Utah Environmental Congress proposes recommending the area for wilderness based on its wildlife habitat, historic features, and opportunities for primitive recreation.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, with effects from livestock grazing and motorized use on open trails and the boundary, and few opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by excluded road corridors, and existing motorized uses in the area and along the boundaries.

Availability is moderate based on permitted allotment activities, the acreage generally suitable for timber harvest, the area's open status for cross-country snowmobile travel, and the trails designated for ATV use.

Need is moderate, because the area would contribute underrepresented vegetation types to the NWPS, but is unlikely to add recreational opportunities because it already receives heavy use.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401204	Mount Lena	31,494	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

**Brush Creek
Potential Wilderness No. 401205
6,936 Acres**

Brush Creek potential wilderness area was not inventoried and evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Uintah County, Utah, about 16 air miles north of Vernal. Access is available from Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop), 044 (Taylor Mountain), and from excluded corridors 0.75 miles long on Forest Roads 241 (Gartell) and 0.5 miles long on 550 (Colton Hollow A-B). Outlaw ATV Trail # 026 crosses in and out of the potential wilderness area in the north.

Physical and Biological Descriptions: Elevations range from 6,600 feet in the south to 8,250 feet in the north. The terrain is gentle to moderate except along Big Brush Creek, where the canyon walls are very steep. Lodgepole pine forests in the north, with spruce and subalpine fir in swales and wet sites, and small areas of sedge-grass meadows, transition to a broader mosaic with more open lands to the south. Pockets of Douglas-fir and areas of mixed mountain shrub and juniper/grass communities are present. The terrain consists of moderately rolling mountain brush, and sagebrush-grassland plains along the southern boundary. Fire occurrence is moderate over most of the potential wilderness area.

A variety of wildlife species, including deer, elk, northern goshawk, and others inhabit and frequent the area.

Existing Activities: The area is used for both motorized and non-motorized trail travel and for dispersed camping on gentler terrain along the Red Cloud Loop. Livestock grazing also takes place here.

Surroundings: Brush Creek potential wilderness area is separated from Dyer Mountain potential wilderness area by a corridor along the Red Cloud Loop on the north. Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area is west of Brush Creek potential wilderness area.

Iron Springs Campground is along the northern boundary, Colton Guard Station is along the southeast boundary, and Brush Creek Canyon Overlook is located next to the eastern boundary of the potential wilderness area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Livestock grazing, heavy dispersed recreation use, and city lights from Vernal have moderately affected the area.

Undeveloped Character: The area has site specific effects from livestock grazing water developments and fences, and from motorized access to maintain the developments. A mining operation in the north has



Vicinity Map

intermittent activities. Additionally, there are effects from uses on ATV trail 026, and from snowmobiles in the northern two-thirds of the area.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The northern boundary area of Brush Creek is one of the areas most heavily used for dispersed recreation on the forest. About two-thirds of the area is mapped as motorized ROS classes. The area's narrow width results in affects from sights, sounds, and smells of motorized activities along the boundaries.

Special Features: Brush Creek Canyon has opportunities for outdoor education.

Manageability: About half of the boundary follows terrain features or road corridors and is easy to locate on the ground. Access and transfer is available from the ends of roads terminating near the boundary, from excluded roads on the east, and from roads along the northern boundary. Managing the area as wilderness would be difficult due to developments throughout the area, excluded road corridors, and activities in the corridors. Boundary changes are unlikely to improve manageability due to the area's small size.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 4,965 acres (73 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 1,971 acres (27 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Trailer camping, hiking, horseback riding and ATV riding occur mainly along the gently rolling areas south of Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop Scenic Backway), the area west of Forest Roads 019 and 240 (Colton Draw area), and the open dry meadow areas along the western boundary. ATV travel is allowed on Trail 026. Few dispersed recreation activities occur on the steep slopes of Big Brush Creek Canyon.

The southern one third of the area is closed to all motorized over-snow vehicles. Although the northern two thirds of the area is open to cross country over-snow motorized vehicle use, most of this use occurs in the gently rolling areas south of Forest Road 018, the areas west of Forest Roads 019 and 240, and the open dry meadow areas along the western boundary. There are no snowmobile trails within the potential wilderness area.

Wildlife: No wildlife projects are currently planned for the area.

Water: There are stock ponds and spring developments which support area livestock grazing.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of the Taylor Mountain and Brush Creek allotments are in the area. The Water developments, fences, and motorized access to maintain developments is allowed.

Timber: The area has 1,598 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There is one mining claim operation located in the northern portion of the area. This operation was active in the year 2000, but is inactive at the date of this evaluation. There are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Leases and exploratory drilling for phosphate mining are immediately south of the potential wilderness area's southern boundary on adjacent lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Location, extent and depth of deposits within the potential wilderness area are unknown.

Heritage: Trail 026 is along the Historic Sheep Driveway that crossed the High Uintas from the Diamond Mountain Area east of the Forest to the Mirror Lake country on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Bullionville CCC Camp was located in the northern portion of the area.

Land Use Authorizations: No additional authorizations were identified.

Other Concerns: Uintah County RS 2477 right-of-way assertions include Forest System Trail 026 (Outlaw ATV Trail) along the northern part of the area.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: The Brush Creek area is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecological subsection, with Limestone Hills, Parks Plateau, Stream Canyons, and South Face Landtype associations. There are small amounts of potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area includes some sagebrush-grassland and pinyon/juniper communities, but they are minor vegetation components.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups commented that the area should be managed for the full range of multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, mining, and wildlife; to contribute water resources, forest products, and a growing demand for OHV opportunities.

Utah Environmental Congress proposes the area west of Big Brush Creek as part of the Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area, and would like to see that part of the area recommended for wilderness.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, with effects from livestock grazing and motorized use on open trails and the boundary, and very few opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by excluded road corridors, and existing motorized uses in the area and along the boundaries.

Availability is moderate based on permitted allotment activities, the acreage generally suitable for timber harvest, the area’s open status for cross-country snowmobile travel, and the trails designated for ATV use.

Need is low, because the area would add little ecological diversity to the NWPS, and is unlikely to add recreational opportunities because the area already receives heavy use.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401205	Brush Creek	6,936	Moderate	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Ashley Gorge Potential Wilderness No. 401206 31,869 Acres

Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01007.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area is located in Uintah County, Utah, about 17 air miles north of Vernal. Access is available from Forest Roads 018 (Red Cloud Loop), 044 (Taylor Mountain), 210 (Frenches Park), and from excluded road corridors along Forest Roads 237 (Red Pine), 238 (East Ashley-Grasshopper), 239 (Single Trough), and 569 (Shippee Sale A-B). Eight Forest System trails are in the potential wilderness area.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 5,850 feet at the mouth of Ashley Gorge Creek to 9,300 feet on Taylor Mountain. The upper part of Ashley Gorge has steep side slopes with numerous palisade cliffs with talus piles beneath. The lower gorge area has very steep canyon sides and vertical or undercut cliffs. The stream at the bottom constantly removes the valley soil and rock torn from the cliffs by high spring flows. Some water from the gorge enters the large limestone karst system of Ashley, Dry Fork, Brownie Canyon, and other drainages. Large open wet-dry meadows, stringer meadows, willows, and aspen with lodgepole line these streams.

The headwaters of Black Canyon and Cow Canyon are on mid-elevation plateaus. The lower portion of Black Canyon consists of extremely steep canyon sidewalls and cliffs. Most of this area has bedrock outcrops, with patches of conifer and broadleaf forests. The rest of the area includes a wide variety of shrubs, forbs, and grasses. There are many stream sections that are intermittently dry due to water entering the subsurface karst system. Fossils can be found in the Mississippian Limestone formations. Red Pine Creek canyon, along the eastern side of the potential wilderness area, has moderately steep tree covered side slopes of cliffs and ledges, with a spruce-fir and lodgepole cover. Wet meadows and bogs are found in the canyon bottom. Forested areas outside the canyon are mostly covered with lodgepole pine. Moist sites have spruce, subalpine fir, and sedge-grass communities.

Grasshopper Flats and areas to the south are comprised of gently rolling plateaus covered by trees and grass. The area is dominated by aspen, sagebrush, and a variety of grasses and forbs. Juniper, sagebrush and grasses are the dominant ground covers, with highly dissected north/south trending ridges and drainages in the southeastern corner of the area. Fire occurrence is moderate over most of the potential wilderness area.

A variety of wildlife species inhabit and frequent the area. Critical range for moose and habitat for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and wild turkey are also present. The Merkley Spring and Single Trough Spring areas contain sage grouse habitat.



Vicinity Map

Ashley Gorge, Black, and Cow Canyons provide habitat particularly suitable for Peregrine Falcon, Northern Goshawk, other raptors, bats, bobcat, cougar, and bear. Natural reproducing populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout exist in North and South Forks Ashley Creek. Amphibians may inhabit potholes along these drainages.

Existing Activities: The area supplies municipal water for Vernal. Popular recreational activities in Ashley Gorge are hiking, rock-hounding, viewing natural and historic features, fishing, and hunting. Dispersed camping, ATV riding, and snowmobiling are popular outside the gorge as allowed by the travel plan. The area also provides livestock grazing.

Surroundings: Road corridors and larger roaded areas separate Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area from Dyer Mountain and Brush Creek potential wilderness areas on the east, and South Slope High Country and Lower Dry Fork East potential wilderness areas on the west.

An area overlooking the mouth of Ashley Gorge is at the end of Forest Road 239, and road access to Red Pine Creek is available from Forest Road 237. Both of these roads are in corridors excluded from the potential wilderness area.

Forest Road 018, along the western boundary is designated as Red Cloud Loop Scenic Backway.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Livestock grazing has affected plant communities in a few open areas, and water use for grazing has slightly affected the aquatic system of the area. Part of the area is affected by lights from Vernal.

Undeveloped Character: Several small developments and uses affect the character. Unclassified roads along the eastern boundary provide access to grazing developments, including springs, ponds, underground pipelines and fences. Some cross-country snowmobiling on the flat terrain above the gorge affects the area with sights, sounds, and smells. There are eight trails in the area, five of which are open to ATV use.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: About half of the area presently offers non-motorized settings. Encounters with other visitors are common along the northern and eastern boundaries, where the area is bounded by roads and more developed lands. Canyon walls, steep terrain, and vegetation help create a sense of isolation in the valley and gorge areas.

Special Features: The Ashley Gorge Research Natural Area (1,085 acres) is located along the fork of Red Pine Creek, Cow Canyon Creek, and Ashley Gorge Creek. The values associated with this RNA are: vegetation – blue spruce, aspen, lodgepole pine, cottonwood; hydrologic – high gradient perennial stream, riparian dogwood; and geologic – metamorphic, sedimentary rocks.

A portion of the Sims Peak Potholes Research Natural Area (650 acres) is within the western boundary near South Fork of Ashley Creek. The values associated with this RNA are: vegetation – spruce-fir; hydrologic/lentic - pond, marsh, bog and wet meadow; and geologic – lateral moraine & potholes.

Manageability: About half of the area's boundaries can be located on the ground, and opportunities for access and transfer are present from existing roads along the boundary and in excluded corridors. Some boundary adjustments may be needed to improve the location and reduce conflicts. Enforcement issues would be few because much of the terrain is inaccessible for motorized vehicles.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 15,397 acres (49 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 11,574 acres (36 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 4,898 acres (15 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Eight Forest System trails are located within the potential wilderness area. Trails 026, 030, 034, 035, 036, 106, 110, and 111 provide access along the major drainage ways within the potential wilderness area, such as Cow Canyon, Black Canyon and Red Pine Creek. ATV use is allowed on five of the eight trails (Trails 026, 034, 035, 106, and 110). ATV use on trail 035 is only allowed on the most western 0.25 miles of its length.

Hiking is the dominant recreation use in Ashley Gorge. Rock-hounding and visiting historic features are common activities. Limited kayaking and canoeing occurs in the lower one half of the gorge during early spring runoff (classes 2 through 5 experience level). Outstanding fishing occurs along the upper portion of the gorge.

Seventy percent of the area is open to cross country travel by motorized over-snow vehicles when snow is at least 12" deep. Three areas within the area are closed to all motorized over-snow vehicles, including the pot holes country south of Hicks Park and South Fork Ashley Creek, the Red Pine Creek/Ashley Creek area north of Grasshopper Flat, and Merkley Spring/Single Trough Spring areas. The Utah Snowmobile Association considers areas open to snowmobiling within the potential wilderness area as an "important over-snow cross-country area for snowmobiling".

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed several projects to provide corridors between summer and winter habitat for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. The proposals include prescribed fire and mechanical treatments, and would begin after 2010.

Natural reproducing populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout exists in the North and South Forks of Ashley Creek. The North Fork Ashley Creek is considered to be a priority for future recovery efforts within the historic range of the species.

Water: The Black Canyon and Cow Canyon areas and the lower half of Ashley Gorge contribute a large amount of water to and are within the Vernal Municipal Watershed.

Water is transported by the Oaks Park Canal and pipeline outside the area's eastern boundary and diverted in a side-drainage in the Grasshopper Flat area. The water is then routed to Ashley Creek and to livestock and wildlife ponds and troughs within the potential wilderness area.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of Black Canyon and Taylor Mountain allotments are within the area. Developments include 13 livestock/wildlife troughs and ponds, 12 to 15 miles of underground water pipeline, and 7 to 10 miles of fence. Motorized vehicle access is allowed to maintain these developments.

Timber: The area has 10,904 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential is low, and the probability of locatable minerals is low. There are no existing mineral activities and no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Phosphate deposits and leases are located immediately south of the potential wilderness area's southern boundary on adjacent lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Location, extent and depth of the deposits within the potential wilderness area are unknown.

Heritage: One feature is the historic sheep driveway that crossed the High Uintas from the Diamond Mountain Area east of the Forest to the Mirror Lake country on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Carter Military Road, listed on the National Register, is located along the eastern side of the area.

Some evidence of prehistoric uses exists, but due to limited access few surveys have been done. Current uses of the Ashley Gorge area by members of the Ute Tribe are evident.

Land Use Authorizations: The area includes lands in the Vernal Municipal Watershed.

Other Concerns: RS 2477 right-of-way assertions are within excluded corridors and outside the area.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Ashley Gorge potential wilderness area is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecological subsection and has Trout Slope, Limestone Hills, Parks Plateau, Alpine Moraine, and South Face Landtype Associations. There is potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area is highly diverse and may contribute additional life forms, geomorphic processes, and vegetative cover; including the unique ecological conditions in Ashley Gorge and Sims Peak Potholes Research Natural Areas; to the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would be minimally enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups site existing domestic and agricultural water uses, potential water sources and water storage, and dispersed recreation access for local needs as reasons for not recommending the area for wilderness designation. The also discussed the need for timber and grazing, and effects to grazing permittees.

Utah Environmental Congress considers the area to have outstanding wilderness qualities, and commented on the area’s large size and present management as mostly non-motorized, and the quality primitive recreation settings. They also noted the scenic qualities, virgin ponderosa pine forested area, and range of habitat for fish and wildlife. UEC recommended removing the southeastern part of the unit due to impacts from grazing, water troughs, and unclassified roads.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with minor effects from livestock grazing and motorized use on the boundary, and good opportunities for solitude and challenge in the area’s core. Manageability could be improved with boundary locations.

Availability is low based on municipal watershed commitments. Other concerns are permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and snowmobile opportunities.

Need is moderate based on the potential contribution of the area’s unique geology and ecologic conditions to the NWPS, but the area is unlikely to add wilderness recreational opportunities because it already has high visitor use.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401206	Ashley Gorge	31,869	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Lower Dry Fork East Potential Wilderness No. 401207 5,513 Acres

Lower Dry Fork potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: Lower Dry Fork East is located in Uintah County, Utah, about 12 air miles northwest of Vernal. Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop) provides access to the area. Unclassified roads cross into the potential wilderness area in Brownie Canyon and within the western boundary.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 6,750 feet in the south to 9,000 feet in the north. The portion of Dry Fork Creek along the western boundary is part of the geologically significant karst system. Water in the creek flows after the large underground karst system is filled, usually only through June. The karst system flows underground to the Ashley Creek Drainage.



Vicinity Map

The area along the northern boundary has rough, boulder covered slopes with lodgepole pine and sedge-grouse whortleberry vegetation. There are small amounts of Douglas-fir/snowberry and aspen/grass-sedge communities. The interior canyon slopes are dissected by widely spaced gullies that have cut down to bedrock. These slopes support mixed mountain shrubs, ponderosa pine and grass, and Douglas-fir with Oregon grape communities. The steep slopes along the western boundary have active soil movement, and a forest cover of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir and some aspen.

Along Dry Fork and Brownie Canyons, plant communities include Douglas- fir/Oregon grape on the limestone-derived soils, and lodgepole pine/ grouse whortleberry on the glacial moraine. An aspen/narrow leaf cottonwood/snowberry community dominates the vegetative cover in the lower canyon bottoms. A blue spruce/grass community is intermingled with other communities, and side slopes have a dominance of mountain brush with some juniper at the lower elevations.

Fire occurrence is moderate over most of the potential wilderness area. Recent fires occurred in 1995 along the western boundary and 2003 along the northern boundary.

This area is important summer range and a travel corridor for deer, elk, and other species. Mountain lions and bobcats prefer the steep rugged bedrock areas of the side tributaries and bears can be found in the canyon bottoms. A strong population of brook trout occupies the upper areas of Dry Fork Creek.

Existing Activities: Brownie Canyon and Dry Fork Canyon areas are part of the Vernal Municipal Watershed. Popular recreational activities in Dry Fork East are dispersed camping, hunting, and hiking, particularly in the Brownie and Dry Fork Canyon areas, and some early season kayaking in Dry Fork Creek. Snowmobiling is popular along boundary roads. Livestock grazing takes place in the northern part of the area.

Surroundings: Ashley Gorge, Lower Dry Fork East, South Slope High Country, and Lower Dry Fork West potential wilderness areas are separated from Lower Dry Fork East by corridors along classified roads and roaded areas.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: Small amounts of cattle grazing have slightly affected natural integrity.

Undeveloped Character: The presence of unclassified roads, though closed to public travel, reduce the undeveloped character. Grazing developments and fences are also present.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area is influenced by sights, sounds, and smells of activities along the boundaries of the narrow area. Encounters with other visitors are common. There is little infrastructure and no destinations which attract visitors to the interior of the area.

Special Features: None have been identified.

The Dry Fork Flume Interpretive Trail is located along portions of Lower Dry Fork Creek and is a popular hiking trail with local residents.

Manageability: Much of the boundary lies along corridors of classified roads, and could be identified on the ground. The roads along the boundary provide opportunities for transfer. The small size of the area does not allow for boundary changes because the small size of the area would be further reduced.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 1,803 acres (34 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 3,710 acres (66 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Hunting, dispersed camping, and hiking are mostly concentrated in the Brownie and Dry Fork Canyon areas, with minimal use in the majority of the potential wilderness area. These recreation activities occur from late spring to late fall months. Some kayaking and canoeing occurs in portions of Dry Fork Creek for about a 30 to 40 day period during early spring runoff (class 3 and 4 experience level).

The potential wilderness area is open to cross country over-snow motorized vehicles. There are no snowmobile trails within the potential wilderness area. Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity on Forest Roads adjacent to area boundaries. Most recreationists are from the local area.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed several projects to provide corridors between summer and winter habitat for bighorn sheep. The proposals include prescribed fire and mechanical treatments that would begin after 2010.

Water: Brownie Canyon and Dry Fork Canyon areas are part of the Vernal Municipal Watershed area. Streams, springs and the limestone karst system in these canyon areas provide a significant amount of water to the municipal water system.

Livestock Grazing: Part of the Black Canyon allotment is in the area.

Timber: The area has 2,283 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: Historic irrigation canals and remnants of a flume used in early timber harvesting activities are located in the Dry Fork drainage. Historic gold mining activities and sheep use are evident throughout the segment.

Culturally modified trees (CMTs) and rock are found in the bottom of Dry Fork Canyon. The area also has representation of traditional cultural properties.

Land Use Authorizations: Brownie Canyon and Dry Fork Canyon areas are part of the Vernal Municipal Watershed.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Lower Dry Fork East is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecological subsection, and has Trout Slope, Parks Plateau, and Stream Canyon landtype associations. There is marginal habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area may contribute unique geology to the NWPS, however most ecological components are very similar those found in the High Uintas Wilderness.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups commented that the area should be managed for the full range of multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber and wildlife. They site the area’s potential to fill recreation needs due to the close proximity to population centers in the Uintah Basin, the dependency of Vernal on the area for water, mineral and timber potential, and the need to retain access for management activities. Support for wilderness recommendation was received from those who commented that they would like to see all roadless areas as wilderness.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, with effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, motorized use on boundary, and limited opportunities for solitude and primitive settings. Manageability is limited by the size and effects along boundaries.

Availability is moderate based on municipal watershed management, allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and snowmobile opportunities.

Need is low based on the minimal ecological contribution of its unique geology, and the limited recreation the area would add because visitor use is already high.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401207	Lower Dry Fork East	5,513	Moderate	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Lower Dry Fork West Potential Wilderness No. 401208 11,301 Acres

Lower Dry Fork West potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Uintah County, Utah, about 11 air miles northwest of Vernal. Access is available from Forest Road 018 (Red Cloud Loop), 031 (Horseshoe Park), 104 (Mosby Mountain), and from excluded corridors along Forest Roads 450 (Massey Cave) and 453 (Lower Flat Spring). There is one mile of unclassified road near of Gull Lake. Three Forest System trails are located within portions of the potential wilderness area.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 6,450 to 9,000 feet. The northern part of the potential wilderness area is comprised of side slopes and stream bottoms of moderate to steep relief with inclusions of wet meadows in the bottoms. Vegetative cover is dominated by lodgepole pine with inclusions of Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir and some Douglas-fir. Aspen is common in some areas.

The Middle Dry Fork canyon area has side slopes with intervening gullies that are very steep and serve as mudflow and avalanche chutes. Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir-aspen/snowberry dominates the overstory with inclusions of subalpine fir or mixed mountain shrub.

Gull Lake and numerous springs are located on a large plateau dominated by aspen and sagebrush communities in the southern half of the area. Along the southern boundary slopes are moderately steep with small seeps. Mountain big sagebrush with blue bunch wheatgrass is the most common vegetation.

This area is an important summer range and travel corridor for deer, elk, and other species. Mountain lions and bobcats prefer the steep rugged bedrock areas of the side tributaries and bears can be found in the canyon bottoms. Habitat also exists for Canada, northern goshawk, boreal owl, great gray owl, flammulated owl, spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, sage grouse, three-toed woodpecker, Lincoln's sparrow, song sparrow, red-naped sapsucker, warbling vireo, and golden eagle. Moose, elk and deer frequent the Gull Lake area. Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat is present in upper areas of Dry Fork Creek; brook trout are present in these same areas, with a strong population.

Existing Activities: The area is part of a municipal watershed for Vernal, and part of the area is used for cattle grazing. Hunting, dispersed camping, and hiking are concentrated in Brownie and Dry Fork Canyon, with minimal recreational activities across the rest of the area.

Surroundings: Lower Dry Fork East and South Slope High Country potential wilderness areas are separated from Dry Fork West by corridors along classified roads. The eastern boundary of Lower Whiterocks potential wilderness area is about 0.5 miles west of Lower Dry Fork West.



Vicinity Map

Forest Road 018, along the eastern boundary, is a designated Forest Service Scenic Backway.

Julius Park and Paradise Park Reservoirs are located west and north of the potential wilderness area. Water from the area is diverted to the Mosby Canal. The canal follows part of the western boundary before entering Julius Park Reservoir about 0.25 miles to the west.

A parcel of private land (Massey Ranch) is along the eastern boundary.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: The area has been slightly affected by livestock grazing and non-native fish such as brook trout.

Undeveloped Character: The area has effects from Livestock grazing, stock ponds, spring developments, and fences are most common in the south and west. Past mine activity is evident in the Flat Springs area. Unclassified roads are apparent, particularly in these areas. Cross-country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles affects the area with sights, sounds, and smells.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area is influenced by sights, sounds, and smells from developments and uses along the boundaries; however the terrain does allow for some isolation near the center of the area. Encounters with other visitors are common. Trails 127 and 128 provide non-motorized access to the Gull Lake area located in the southern half of the potential wilderness area. Trail 032 provides non-motorized access along Sink Ridge on the south facing slopes of Middle Fork of Dry Fork Creek and terminates at Horseshoe Park.

Special Features: The Dry Fork Flume Interpretive Trail is located along portions of Lower Dry Fork Creek and is a popular hiking trail with local residents.

Manageability: About half of the boundary lies along classified roads, and can be identified on the ground and provide opportunities for visitor transfer. The Forest boundary is the potential wilderness boundary on the south. Effects to the undeveloped character are in this area; but moving this boundary would not improve manageability due to edge effect.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 5,687 acres (52 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 3,403 acres (28 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 2,211 acres (20 percent) roaded natural ROS classes. The recreationists mostly come from the local area.

Motorized travel and activities are concentrated along perimeter roads. Hunting, dispersed camping, horse back riding, and hiking are mostly concentrated in the lower canyon bottom of Middle Dry Fork Canyon, in the Horseshoe Park area along the northern boundary, and in the Gull Lake area. These recreation activities occur from late spring to late fall months. Other areas receive minimal use, due to steep, heavily vegetated slopes.

Cross-country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles is presently allowed on 80% of the area. The remaining 20% of the area (Gull Lake and Middle Mountain) is closed to this use.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed several projects to provide corridors between summer and winter habitat for bighorn sheep. The proposals include prescribed fire and mechanical treatments that would begin after 2010.

Water: Brownie Canyon and Dry Fork Canyon areas are part of the Vernal Municipal Watershed area. Streams, springs and the limestone karst system in these canyon areas provide a significant amount of water to the municipal water system.

Livestock Grazing: Parts off the Mosby Mountain and Lake Mountain allotments are within the area. Livestock grazing use takes place in the west and south. Motorized access to the numerous stock ponds, spring developments, and fences is allowed.

Timber: The area has 2,163 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential, and probability of locatable minerals are low. Past mining activity is evident in the Flat Springs area. There are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: There are old irrigation canals and remnants of a flume used in early timber harvesting activities in the Dry Fork drainage. Historic gold mining activities and sheep use are evident throughout the area.

Land Use Authorizations: No additional authorizations were identified.

Other Concerns: Uintah County RS 2477 assertions for the area are Forest Road 450 (Massey Cave), including a route which continues beyond the excluded corridor and terminates at Horseshoe Park; Forest Road 453 (Lower Flat Spring), including a route which continues beyond the excluded corridor and accesses Lower Flat Spring; one mile of unclassified road to the Gull Lake area and other claims outside and along the area boundary.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Lower Dry Fork West potential wilderness area is part of the Trout Creek Peak Highlands ecological subsection, and has Trout Slope, Parks Plateau, South Face, and Stream Canyon, and Alpine Moraine landtype associations. There is marginal habitat for lynx and wolverine. The area may contribute unique geology to the NWPS, however most ecological components are very similar those found in the High Uintas Wilderness.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas would not be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would not be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area already has high visitor use.

Public Input: Local government groups commented that the area should be managed for the full range of multiple uses. They site the area's potential to fill recreation needs due to the close proximity to population centers in the Uintah Basin, the dependency of Vernal on the area for water, mineral and timber potential, and the need to retain access for management activities.

Utah Environmental Congress included this area in its Uintas #3 wilderness proposal, and list several site specific biological, geological, and historic features which they believe would benefit from the protection provided by wilderness designation.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is moderate, with effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, motorized use on boundary, and limited opportunities for solitude and primitive settings. Manageability is limited by the size and effects along boundaries.

Availability is moderate based on municipal watershed management, allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and snowmobile opportunities.

Need is low based on the minimal ecological contribution of its unique geology, and the limited recreation the area would add because visitor use is already high.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401208	Lower Dry Fork West	11,301	Moderate	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

**Lower Whiterocks
Potential Wilderness No. 401209
32,611 Acres**

Lower Whiterocks potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of Whiterocks River Roadless Area # 01008.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne County (12,451 acres) and Uintah County (20,160 acres), Utah, about 26 air miles north of Roosevelt and 28 air miles northwest of Vernal. Access is available from Forest Roads 117 (Elkhorn Loop) and 110 (West Fork-Whiterocks), and from excluded corridors along Forest Roads 492 (Whiterocks), 282 (Buck Ridge), 441 (Grouse Creek Overlook) and 442 (Grouse Creek).

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 6,750 feet near Elkhorn Guard Station to 9,000 feet in the north. The terrain in the Whiterocks River canyon bottom is thin hummocky ground moraine and outwash with some inner gorges cut deep into the underlying quartzite bedrock. Stream banks are armored with quartzite boulders and cobbles. Vegetative cover along the slopes consists of mixed conifer forest at upper elevations and lodgepole pine at lower elevations. Whiterocks River passes through small wet meadows that are fed by numerous springs and seeps, and dense stands of mountain brush.

Terrain along portions of the eastern boundary located south of Paradise Reservoir range from gently sloping shoulders to steep pitches of 40 percent or more. The lodgepole pine cover includes small amounts of Douglas-fir and aspen. The western portion of the area (Buck Ridge, Farm Creek, and east slopes of Whiterocks Canyon) has steep to moderately steep canyon side slopes. Vegetation is a mix of Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and Douglas-fir-aspen overstory with minor inclusions of mixed mountain shrub. In the northwest the topography is marked by long lateral moraines, some of which contain wet meadows dominated by grasses and sedges. Forested areas have dense lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce and alpine fir. Black sagebrush is the dominant shrub over much of the southwest. Fire occurrence is moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area. The Neola North fire burned through much of the area in 2007.

The area is used by a variety of wildlife species. Whiterocks River has a strong population of brook trout. Rainbow trout and cutthroat trout are also present.

Existing Activities: The area is used for camping and access to the larger undeveloped area for a variety of recreational activities, including accessing the High Uintas Wilderness. Whiterocks Cave is a heavily visited attraction within the area. Livestock grazing is an established use.



Vicinity Map

Surroundings: Pole Creek and High Uintas B potential wilderness areas are nearby to the west, Lower Dry Fork West is about .5 miles to the east, and the area shares a short section of boundary with South Slope High Country potential wilderness area.

Whiterocks Campground is within the exclusion along Forest Road 492. Paradise Park Reservoir and campground are two miles east of the eastern boundary. Elk Horn Guard Station is located in close proximity to the southern boundary.

Selectively harvested and thinned forest areas along Forest Roads 492 and 282 are excluded with the roads in the corridors.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: The area has been slightly affected by livestock grazing and non-native fish.

Undeveloped Character: The character has been affected by Schulthes and Marimon ditches either side of Whiterocks River, the sights, sounds, and smells from yearlong activities along excluded road corridors and road sections along the boundaries, and by unclassified roads. Past mines and prospects are also present, as well as fences and ponds for grazing livestock, and a gauging station.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area has diverse and challenging terrain with areas separated by topographic features. Very few visitors go to the northern and central 60% of the area, and encounters with other visitors are infrequent in the remaining 40% of the area. Edge effects of sights, sounds, and smells are likely along the excluded road corridors and perimeter roads in the southern part of the area.

Special Features: Whiterocks Cave is a unique and outstanding attraction with non-motorized access by trail. Whiterocks Canyon also has other interesting geologic features.

Manageability: The presence of excluded roads, particularly Whiterocks road which penetrates the area for 5.5 miles, would make the area difficult to manage. Only a few parts of the boundary are identifiable on the ground. There are opportunities for visitor transfer. Some of the manageability issues could be resolved with new boundary locations and by combining the area with adjacent potential wilderness areas.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 12,146 acres (37 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 10,717 acres (33 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 9,748 acres (30 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding mainly take place along Forest Road 492, and in the Farm Creek Canyon area. The Farm Creek Trail (134) is closed to motorized uses. Very few activities occur on the steep slopes of Whiterocks Canyon and along the canyon bottom, due to lack of access and rugged terrain. ATV use is allowed on some excluded roads.

The southeast corner of the potential wilderness area (Grouse Creek/Mill Canyon) is closed to all cross country over-snow motorized vehicles. Although the remaining 90% of the area is open to this use, very steep terrain and heavy underbrush are obstacles to over-snow motorized vehicles. Some snowmobiling does occur within the Farm Creek area. There are no snowmobile trails within the potential wilderness area.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed several projects to provide corridors between summer and winter habitat for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. The proposals include prescribed fire and mechanical treatments, and would begin after 2010.

Whiterocks River is under consideration for Colorado River cutthroat trout reintroduction plan, and projects could include fish barrier structures or other treatments to improve habitat.

Water: The Uintah Unit of the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Utah has proposed construction of diversion structures in the Lower Whiterocks River area below the area for irrigation purposes downstream. Although authorized for construction by the 1968 Colorado River Basin Project Act, designs and construction schedules have never been released by the Bureau of Reclamation. Recent construction of Big Sand Wash Reservoir northwest of the Roosevelt and Upalco areas has affected project proposals. The Ashley National Forest has not received information on how or if the proposed water diversion structures on the Lower Whiterocks River would involve National Forest system lands.

The Schulthes and Marimon ditches are located on the west and east sides of Whiterocks River, respectively. The Schulthes ditch is located within the boundary of the potential wilderness area, while the Marimon ditch is outside of the potential wilderness area.

Two spring developments under special use permit are along the south central and south eastern boundary.

A USGS gauging station is located within the south central portion of the potential wilderness area and two USGS gauging stations are located within the boundary in Lower Whiterocks Canyon.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of the Mosby Mountain, Whiterocks Canyon, and Farm Creek allotments are in the area. There are numerous stock ponds range fences, and spring developments. Motorized vehicle access is allowed for maintenance of these developments.

Timber: The area has 5,039 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: The potential for oil and gas discovery and development, and probability of locatable minerals in this area are low. There is one plugged and abandoned oil and gas well located in the southeaster corner of the potential wilderness area.

Past mining activities were conducted near Ice Cave Peak, and north of Whiterocks Campground. Past prospecting is also visible in the lower part of Whiterocks Canyon. There is a shale deposit borrow site located north of Whiterocks Campground. There are no active mines located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

A tar sands development exists on private land adjacent to the southeastern corner of the area. Tar sands deposits extend in to the potential wilderness area along the southeastern boundary, but these deposits are not under lease. There are 4 capped drill sites connected with the tar sand deposits along the south central boundary.

Heritage: There are no known historical or prehistoric sites.

Land Use Authorizations: Grazing permits for the area include provisions for water developments and fences, and for motorized access to maintain these facilities.

An outfitter/guide permit covers most of the potential wilderness area.

Other Concerns: RS 2477 assertion by Uintah County include the entire 5.5 mile length of Forest Road 492 within the excluded corridor.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Whiterocks potential wilderness area has representation of Johnny Star Benches, Upper Valley Ashley Canyons, Trout Creek Peak Highlands, and Western High Uintas ecological subsections, and has Limestone Hills, Stream Canyon, Parks Plateau, Glacial Bottoms, and Alpine Moraine landtype associations. There is potential habitat for lynx and marginal potential habitat for wolverine. The vegetation, geology, and other characteristics are well represented in the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 250 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas may be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS may be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness due to the area location and access.

Public Input: Local government groups commented that the area should be managed for the full range of multiple uses. They site the area’s potential to fill recreation needs due to the close proximity to population centers in the Uintah Basin, the need for more water developments, mineral and timber potential, and the need to retain access for management activities.

Utah Environmental Congress included this area in its Uintas #3 wilderness proposal, and list several site specific biological, geological, and historic features which they believe would benefit from the protection provided by wilderness designation.

The High Uintas Preservation Council proposes combining Lower Whiterocks with South Slope High Country, North Slope High Country and Roadshed potential wilderness areas, and suggests the result would be a more diverse roadless landscape with resulting higher wilderness capability for an addition to the High Uintas Wilderness.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with concentrated effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and motorized activities on boundary and in excluded road corridors. There are opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by the number and distribution of excluded road corridors, and could be improved with different boundaries.

Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals. Other concerns are the acres with potential for timber harvest, permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and cross-country snowmobile travel.

Need is moderate, based on the potential to contribute recreation opportunities, and limited potential for ecological contribution due to its similarity to existing wilderness.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401209	Lower Whiterocks	32,611	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

High Uintas A Potential Wilderness No. 401301 21,669 Acres

The High Uintas A potential wilderness area east of Moon Lake and Forest Road 131 was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901. West of the lake and road was not included in the 1983 inventory and evaluation.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne County, Utah, about 24 air miles northwest of Roosevelt and 27 air miles north of Duchesne. Access is available from Forest Roads 227 (Hells Canyon-Fish Creek), 196 (Petty Creek-Hells Canyon), 131 (Moon Lake) and 225 (Dry Ridge). Routes providing access from excluded corridors are 5.2 miles of Forest Road 311 (Paint Mine) in the northwest part of the area, short segments of Forest Road 331 and a connected Trail 062 (Brown Duck-motorized), and 0.6 miles of Forest Road 226 (Dry Canyon A & B).



Vicinity Map

Physical and Biological Descriptions: Elevations range from 7,500 feet along the southern boundary to 10,600 feet in the Slate Creek drainage. Center Park area has gently to steep slopes with a lodgepole pine overstory. Fish Creek and Raspberry Draw have moderate to very steep terrain with a tree cover of lodgepole pine overstory and small amounts of aspen, Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. Little Meadow and Cow Park are two large wet meadows immediately south of Fish Creek. Upper Mackentire Draw area is forested with mixed conifers, aspen, and mountain brush. The lower Mackentire Draw area has cliffs and steep bedrock outcrops on the upper valley walls, with scattered mixed conifer and mountain brush.

The Mule Creek and Petty Creek areas have long south facing slopes with gentle to moderately steep terrain. Black sagebrush and perennial grasses cover most of the area. Slate Creek and Brown Duck Creek have Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir covered ridge tops. Steep canyon walls are mantled by boulders and steep gullies from Slate Creek drainage to Dry Canyon. Dominant tree cover includes Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Small wet areas are found at the lower end of the steep slopes in the Slate Creek drainage. In the Dry Canyon area the steep slopes are underlain by shale covered with mixed conifers and mountain brush. Along the top of Dry Ridge, the overstory is lodgepole with small amounts of Douglas-fir and aspen. Fire occurrence is moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area.

A variety of wildlife species occupy and frequent the area. Summer and winter habitat is available for deer, elk, and moose. Mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and birds of prey also use the area. Brown Duck Creek contains habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Existing Activities: The area is used for livestock grazing and for dispersed recreation. Fish Creek National Recreation Trail and two other trails provide non-motorized access to the High Uintas Wilderness. There are a few motorized road and trail opportunities. Dispersed camping, fishing, and hunting are common area activities.

Surroundings: High Uintas A potential wilderness area is near Hells Canyon potential wilderness area to the east and has a common boundary with High Uintas C on the west. The northern boundary of the area is the southern boundary of the High Uintas Wilderness. Ute Indian Tribal lands and private lands (lower Mule Creek & lower Petty Creek) border the potential wilderness area in Lake Fork River drainage.

Moon Lake and Moon Lake Campground and Lodge are located along the boundary of the potential wilderness area at the end of Forest Road 131. Developed recreation activities, including camping, cabin rental, and boating and fishing occur at the Moon Lake recreation complex.

A 160 acre parcel of private land is also located along Forest Road 131 between Moon Lake and the southern boundary of the potential wilderness area.

The Uintah Mountain Copper Company Paint Mine iron oxide leases at the end of Forest Road 311 have been excluded from the potential wilderness.

Power distribution lines and canals border the potential wilderness area along Forest Road 131. One USGS gauging station is near the boundary in the Fish Creek area, and another is north of Moon Lake.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: There are minor effects from cattle grazing, water uses, the presence of non-native fish, and recreational activities.

Undeveloped Character: There are effects from the Moon Lake Campground spring development and gauging station, trail 127 and a segment of trail 062 open to motorized travel, several unclassified roads in Petty Creek and Mule Creek, and grazing developments in Mackentire Draw.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area offers solitude and challenge in the topographically separate Fish Creek and Raspberry Draw area. Solitude would not be provided near excluded areas around Moon Lake and the Moon Lake road.

Special Features: The Fish Lake National Recreation Trail in the eastern portion of the potential wilderness area receives moderate seasonal use.

Manageability: The northern boundary would be very manageable because it is the same as the boundary of the High Uintas Wilderness. The area's outer perimeter is along road corridors and terrain features or adjacent to other potential wilderness areas. The excluded corridors could be adjusted to better exclude conflicting uses and improve manageability.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 156 acres primitive (less than 1 percent), 9135 acres (43 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 7,253 acres (34 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 5,125 acres (23 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

ATV travel is permitted on a 1.5 mile segment of trail 062 and all of trail 127 within the potential wilderness area. Trail 127 allows ATV travel from Flea Flat to the southeastern portion of the potential wilderness area. Activities such as hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and camping occur mainly in the Center Park area, upper Fish Creek, and Slate Creek drainage. Activities outside of these areas are limited due to lack of trails, steep slopes, and heavy tree and brush cover.

Although the potential wilderness area is open to cross country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles, most of this use is confined to existing unclassified roads within the area and classified roads outside of or excluded from the area. Steep to very steep terrain and heavy tree and brush cover are obstacles to most over-snow motorized vehicles.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed bighorn sheep habitat improvement projects in the Lake Fork River drainage. A combination of prescribed fire and timber harvest would be used to improve habitat and encourage the reestablishment of bighorn sheep. Treatments would likely occur after 2010.

Water: A Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal covers lands occupied by Moon Lake Reservoir and lands located on both sides of the reservoir. Officials from the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District and Bureau of Reclamation have completed a *Safety Evaluation of Existing Dams* for Moon Lake, and have a request from Moon Lake Water Users Association concerning a reservoir expansion. If approved and implemented, an expansion may affect the boundaries of the High Uintas A potential wilderness area. No formal expansion proposal has been received by the Forest Service.

Duchesne County Water Conservancy District, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, and Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission have expressed concern for maintaining roads in and near the area for access to stabilize and maintain lakes in the High Uintas Wilderness.

A spring development, water tank, chlorinator, and water line for Moon Lake Campground and an unclassified access road are located within the potential wilderness area at the lower end of Brown Duck Creek.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of the Petty Mountain and Lake Fork allotments are in the area. Grazing use takes place in Mill Park and Cow Park areas in the northeast, on the adjacent lower slopes of lower Lake Fork Canyon, and in the Mule Creek and Petty Creek areas. One range fence exists in Petty Creek. Developed springs are located in the Mackentire Draw and Mule Creek drainages.

Timber: The area has 4,564 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential is low. A mining claim within part of the area includes a proposed exploratory drill site just within the western boundary of the potential wilderness area along Forest Road 225.

Heritage: Surveys have not been done in this area and no sites are on record.

Land Use Authorizations: Three outfitter/guide permits cover outfitting and guiding use of portions of the potential wilderness area.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: High Uintas A potential wilderness area is part of the Western High Uintas ecological subsection, and has South Face, Dry Moraine, Parks Plateau, Glacial Bottoms, Glacial Canyons, Trout Slope, Uinta Bollie, and Alpine Moraine landtype associations. The area has potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The vegetation, geology, and other characteristics are similar to those characteristics in the High Uintas, and are well represented in the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas may be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area has unique and interesting features and is adjacent to existing wilderness.

Public Input: Local government groups commented on the need to retain options for water developments and storage in the area. They also commented on the area’s potential for multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, wildlife and water developments.

The High Uintas Preservation Council commented that the area should be combined with six nearby potential wilderness areas to consider as one large recommended addition to the High Uintas Wilderness. They state that the combined area would have improved wilderness capability and potential to improve the ecological diversity of the High Uintas Wilderness. Utah Environmental Congress provided similar comments.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with concentrated effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and motorized activities along boundary and in excluded road corridors. There are opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by the number and distribution of excluded road corridors, and could be improved with different boundaries.

Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals. Other concerns are the acres with potential for timber harvest, permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and cross-country snowmobile travel.

Need is moderate because the area is similar to existing wilderness and would not add to ecological representation; however, it would add desirable recreation settings.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401301	High Uintas A	21,669	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

High Uintas B Potential Wilderness No. 401301 46,413 Acres

High Uintas B potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne County, Utah, about 22 air miles northwest of Roosevelt and 28 air miles northeast of Duchesne. Access is available from Forest Roads 117 (Elkhorn Loop), 227 (Hells Canyon-Fish Creek), and 120 (Jackson Park). Access to the interior of the area is available from excluded corridors along Forest Road 118 (Uinta River) for 4.25 miles, 122 (Dry Gulch) for 1.5 miles, 124 (Upper Yellowstone) for 4.25 miles, and 228 (Wild Horse Ridge A & B) for 1.0 miles.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 7,800 feet at the mouth of Yellowstone Canyon to 11,200 feet on Flat Top Mountain. The rolling terrain has narrow deep canyons in the higher elevations and broader valleys along the lower stretches of the Uinta River, and Yellowstone Creek. Scoured boulders and canyon walls reveal heavy spring runoff in some of the drainages.

Along the northern boundary alpine sedges, grasses, forbs, and conifers transition to sparsely vegetated or barren rounded ridge tops typical of the High Uintas. Below the ridgeline are moderate to steep slopes and upland plateaus covered with mixed conifer forests. Meadows and small lakes are interspersed with the forested cover. Valley bottom cover includes mixed aspen, birch, willow, and alder interspersed with wet meadows.

A variety of wildlife species occupy and frequent the area. Summer and winter habitat is available for deer, elk, and moose. Mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and birds of prey also use the area. Streams in the area contain habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout. Introduced fish species present are brook, brown and rainbow trout.

Existing Activities: Common recreational uses are hunting, fishing, camping, and accessing the High Uintas Wilderness. Four trails for non-motorized travel provide access to the area and to the High Uintas Wilderness from trailheads along boundary or excluded corridor roads. Vegetation treatments have been completed and proposed for bighorn sheep habitat, and stream treatments are proposed to help re-establish Colorado River cutthroat trout. Water and power developments for agricultural and domestic uses on allotments and in the Uintah Basin are ongoing and proposed. Allotments within the area contribute over 1000 cattle grazing AUMs.

Surroundings: The area has a common boundary with the High Uintas Wilderness on the north, and South Slope High Country proposed wilderness area along the northeast corner. Pole Creek, Hells



Vicinity Map

Canyon, and Lower Whiterocks potential wilderness area are separated from High Uintas B by corridors along Forest roads.

Recreation and administrative facilities near the boundary or within excluded road corridors are Uinta Canyon, Uinta, Wandin, Yellowstone, Bridge, Reservoir, Riverview, Swift Creek, and Pole Creek campgrounds, Smokey Springs Day Use Fishing Area, Uinta Canyon and Swift Creek Trailheads, U-Bar Ranch, Uinta and Yellowstone Guard stations, Big Springs Recreation Area (on Uintah and Ouray tribal lands), Crystal Ranch, and other private lands and developments along Yellowstone Creek. Yellowstone ATV Trailhead and Trail are just outside the southern boundary.

A hydroelectric plant and water pipeline are located at the mouth of Yellowstone Canyon. A water diversion is located at Reservoir, outside of the boundary. A power distribution line is located within the southern end of the excluded Forest Road 124 corridor. The Cow Canyon spring development and pipeline are located along and outside the boundary in Cow Canyon. The pipeline descends southward within the excluded corridor along the above mentioned hydroelectric penstock.

Three areas with past timber harvest are excluded from the potential wilderness area. Two are located on the plateau east of Heller Lake and one is along Forest Road 122 in the Lower Dry Gulch Creek area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: There are minor effects from livestock grazing, non-native fish, and water impoundments in and near the area.

Undeveloped Character: Undeveloped character has been moderately affected by unclassified roads; the Heller Lake water storage, pipeline, and other range developments; motorized access by permittees; sights and sounds from road uses in excluded corridors; and by thinning and other vegetation management for wildlife habitat improvement.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: These opportunities are present, particularly in the areas around Timothy Creek, Cow Canyon, Flat Top Mountain area, and east of Uinta Canyon. These areas are minimally influenced by roads, encounters with other visitors are rare, and topographic features create areas of isolation and challenge.

Encounters with humans are likely and regular along southern boundary between Uinta and Hells Canyon and the upper ends of Yellowstone, Hells, and Uinta Canyons. These portions represent about 10 percent of the potential wilderness area, and are impacted by high seasonal use.

Special Features: None have been identified.

Manageability: Area manageability would be high if boundary adjustments were made to exclude nonconforming elements and if adjacent areas or parts of them were also recommended for wilderness designation. Areas adjacent to the High Uintas Wilderness to the north are most easily managed. Excluded road corridors are most manageable where the terrain is limiting, and the corridors provide for visitor transfer.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as acres 36,653 acres (78 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 5,288 acres (12 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 4,472 acres (10 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

ATV and full size vehicles are allowed along most of the roads in excluded corridors. Camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and other activities are most common in the Dry Gulch, Cow Canyon, Timothy Creek Canyon, and Hells Canyon areas. Activities outside of these drainages are limited by lack of trails, heavy tree and brush cover, and steep terrain in canyon areas.

Cross-country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles in the potential wilderness area is allowed, but use is very limited due to the terrain and forest cover. The Utah Snowmobile Association considers areas open to snowmobiling within the potential wilderness area as an “important over-snow cross-country area for snowmobiling”.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has proposed several bighorn sheep travel corridor and habitat improvement projects, which would include a combination of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments. The North Dry Gulch Ponderosa Pine Thinning Project is an ongoing 2,932 acre wildlife habitat improvement project using mechanical tree thinning with projected completion in three to five years.

Utah Division of Wildlife Management (UDWR) plans on using rotenone to eradicate non-native trout in several drainages of High Uintas B potential wilderness area as part of the Colorado River cutthroat trout recovery effort, and temporary and permanent fish barriers would be constructed using mechanical means.

Water: A Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) withdrawal occupies the Uinta River canyon and Yellowstone Creek drainage. According to BOR officials, the withdrawal reserves these lands for activities consistent with the construction, operation, and maintenance of water storage and power production facilities in the future.

The Upalco and Uintah Units of the Bureau of Reclamation’s Central Utah Project include proposals to construct reservoirs and water diversion structures on Lake Fork, Yellowstone, and Uintah rivers. The Duchesne County Water Conservancy District has adopted a plan, *Developing Water from both the Uinta and Green Rivers within the Uinta River Basin and Green River Exchange Project – Preliminary Dam Site Investigation*, dated March 2001. The plan calls for construction of a dam and reservoir on the Uinta River in Uintah County north of Neola, and impounding the water from and on the Forest.

A proposed reservoir on the Yellowstone River is in the general location of Crystal Ranch located immediately south of the Forest Service boundary in the Yellowstone Canyon. Although the Yellowstone River proposal was authorized for construction by the 1956 Colorado River Storage Project Act (Yellowstone River proposal), actual locations, preliminary designs, and construction schedules have not been received by the Forest Service.

Heller Lake and a pipeline diverting water from streams to the lake is under special use permit to Monarch Irrigation Company, which supplies water to range developments downstream. Motorized access is used to maintain these facilities.

The Cow Canyon spring development and pipeline, and proposed expansions, are located along and outside the boundary of the potential wilderness area in Cow Canyon. The pipeline descends southward within an excluded corridor.

Duchesne County Water Conservancy District (DCWCD) and Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCD) have expressed that ground access is needed through High Uintas B potential wilderness area for the purpose of: 1) long-term maintenance of Atwood Lake, Upper and Lower Chain Lakes, and 2) for stabilization work at East Timothy Lake and lakes in Garfield Basin of the Yellowstone River drainage. These lakes are located within the High Uintas Wilderness.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of the Dry Gulch, Yellowstone, Farm Creek, Pole Creek, and Petty Mountain allotments are in the area. Grazing use occurs within the lower areas of Timothy Creek, Cow Canyon, Dry Gulch, and Yellowstone Creek Canyon. Motorized access is allowed to spring developments and stock ponds in the Dry Gulch, Cow Canyon, and the Timothy Creek area. Range fences separate allotments in several parts of the area.

Timber: The area has 15,406 acres with potential for timber harvest

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: No heritage resource sites have been found in the area.

Land Use Authorizations: Outfitter-guide permits have been issued for the general area, including High Uintas B potential wilderness area.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: High Uintas B potential wilderness area is part of the Western High Uintas ecological subsection, and has South Face, Dry Moraine, Stream Canyons, Parks Plateau, Limestone Hills, Glacial Bottoms, Glacial Canyons, Trout Slope, Uinta Bollie, and Alpine Moraine landtype associations. The area has potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The vegetation, geology, and other characteristics are similar to those characteristics in the High Uintas, and are well represented in the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas may be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area has unique and interesting features and is adjacent to existing wilderness.

Public Input: Local government groups commented on the need to retain options for water developments and storage in the area. They also commented on the area’s potential for multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, and water developments.

The High Uintas Preservation Council commented that the area should be combined with six nearby potential wilderness areas, and the entire area considered as one large recommended addition to the High Uintas Wilderness. They state that the combined area would have improved wilderness capability and has potential to improve the ecological diversity of the High Uintas Wilderness. Utah Environmental Congress provided similar comments.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with concentrated effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and motorized activities along boundary and in excluded road corridors. There are opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by the number and distribution of excluded road corridors, and could be improved with different boundaries.

Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals and other water uses. Other concerns are the acres with potential for timber harvest, permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and cross-country snowmobile travel.

Need is moderate because the area is similar to existing wilderness and would not add to ecological representation; however, it would add desirable recreation settings.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401301	High Uintas B	46,413	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

High Uintas C Potential Wilderness No. 401301 48,851 Acres

The High Uintas C potential wilderness area east of Upper Stillwater Reservoir and north of Forest Road 134 was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of High Uintas Roadless Area # 01901. The area west of the lake and north of the road was not included in the 1983 evaluation.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne (46,942 acres) and Wasatch (1,909 acres) Counties, Utah, about 28 air miles northwest Duchesne. Access is available from Forest Roads 225 (Dry Ridge), 134 (Rock Creek-Blind Stream) 144 (North Fork Duchesne), and from excluded corridors along 0.5 miles of Forest Road 484 (Dry Canyon Ridge), and 1.75 miles of Forest Road 222 in Miners Gulch. Forest Road 135 (Blind Stream) and excluded corridors along 4.75 miles of Forest Roads 143 (South Fork Rock Creek), 3.75 miles of 652 (Fairway Loop), 4.5 miles of 140 (The Slope), 0.75 miles of 121 (Digmire Mine), 1.25 miles of 171 and 192 (The West Slope), and short segments of connecting unclassified roads provide access into the western half of the area. Additional excluded Forest Roads and corridors providing access are 2.25 miles of 170 (Wagon Ridge Road), 0.25 miles of 173 (Larsen Hollow), 0.75 miles of 428 (Bishop Road), 3.0 miles of 315 (Hades Canyon), 0.75 miles of 521 (Castle Rock Road).

Non-motorized access within the potential wilderness area and to the High Uintas Wilderness is available on Forest Trails 067, 069, 141, 082, and 074.

Physical and Biological Descriptions: Elevations range from 6,000 feet near Stockmore Guard Station to 11,000 feet in the north. The terrain and vegetation in this area is very diverse. Ridgetops are gentle, with climate stunted subalpine fir and spruce, alpine meadows, and bare rock areas, and mixed conifers along the northern boundary. The west facing slopes of Rock Creek Canyon and upper Miners Gulch include cliffs, rock outcrops of Uinta Mountain Quartzite, and a mosaic of mixed conifers, aspen, and grasses with mountain shrubs. Long glacial moraines are found above the main drainages. Ponderosa pine is present in the Miners Gulch area. Peterson Gulch has steep canyon walls with gullies between conifer forested areas which give way to sagebrush and grasslands in the lower elevations of the drainage. Numerous springs are found in Dry Canyon.

The east facing slopes of Rock Creek drainage have steep lower canyon walls underlain with talus. Dominant vegetation includes mixed conifer-aspen, Douglas-fir/ponderosa pine/aspen, and aspen/mountain shrub. Cirque basins around Survey Lake, Arta Lake and Carl Lake form the headwaters of South Fork Rock Creek. Cushion plant, sedges, and grass occupy the steep rocky slopes wherever pockets of soil have formed. Upper South Fork Rock Creek has moderate to very steep ridge sides and



Vicinity Map

cliffs above the timberline. North slopes are covered with Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Rounded rocky tops have stunted forests and alpine meadow vegetation.

West of North Fork of Duchesne River in the Mill Flat area, the terrain is composed of steep slopes underlain by Red Pine Shale and mantled in places by a thin veneer of quartzite and limestone. The dominant tree cover is Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Associated plants include common juniper, chokecherry, bluegrass, geranium, rushes, and wheatgrass. Ponderosa pine/manzanita, aspen/bluegrass and mixed mountain shrub are also in this area. The canyon bottom south of Mill Flat is composed of slump material and glacial till. Vegetative cover is mostly Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, with some aspen and sagebrush/grass.

A variety of wildlife species occupy and frequent the area. Summer and winter habitat is available for deer, elk, and moose. Mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and birds of prey also use the area. The upper Blind Steam area is considered critical winter range for mountain goat. South Fork Rock Creek has a pure population of Colorado River cutthroat trout. Brook, brown and rainbow trout are found in Rock Creek near lower Stillwater Ponds.

Existing Activities: The area is used for water collection and distribution via Upper Stillwater Reservoir; dispersed recreation associated with the reservoir, Rock Creek, and other developed areas; access from trailheads and non-motorized trails to the High Uintas Wilderness; hunting, and cattle grazing. There are active mining claims. There are also activities associated with habitat conservation and improvement for big horn sheep, Colorado River cutthroat trout, and other species.

Surroundings: High Uintas C has a common boundary with the High Uintas Wilderness on the north, and is separated by road and development corridors from Big Ridge potential wilderness area on the south, Rhoades Canyon potential wilderness area on the west, and High Uintas A potential wilderness area on the east. Uintah and Ouray tribal lands border the southeastern corner.

Developed areas near the southern boundary of the potential wilderness area are Upper Stillwater Reservoir (boating and fishing), Upper Stillwater Campground, Upper Stillwater Forest Service Administrative Site and Visitor Center, Rock Creek Ranch, Yellowstone Campground, Miners Gulch Campground, Fisherman's Day Use Area, a private ranch and fishing ponds, and Lower Stillwater Fishing Ponds. The "Stillwater Siphon" and access road are located along the western boundary. Forest Service developed sites along the western boundary are Splash Dam Campground and Grandview Trailhead along excluded Forest Road 315, Iron Mine Campground, Hades Campground, Aspen Campground, and Stockmore Guard Station.

Two excluded trailheads are located within the east side of the potential wilderness area. Excluded corridors along Forest Roads 173, 428, and 179 include past vegetative treatments.

Residences, ranches, and a dude ranch are located on private property along Forest Road 114.

A power distribution line and buried telephone line border the southeastern boundary along Forest Road 134. A power distribution line and several canals border the western boundary along Forest Road 144 (North Fork Duchesne).

The ongoing Shamrock-Honeycomb Calcite Mine in the upper Blind Steam area and Forest Road 121 access are excluded from the potential wilderness area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: The area has minor effects to the integrity from livestock grazing, introduced trout species, and water impoundments.

Undeveloped Character: The character has been affected by range improvements and unclassified road access in Peterson Gulch and Dry Canyon area, a pipeline and inlet structures in Hades Canyon, and unclassified roads with constructed sections west and south of Upper Stillwater Reservoir and along the western boundary. The area is open to cross-country travel by snowmobiles, with activities and effects mostly south and west of South Fork Rock Creek drainage and west of Forest Road 135.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: There are effects to solitude along the edges of the area, particularly near Upper Stillwater Reservoir. Areas of isolation result from topographic screening on 60 percent of the area, but not in a contiguous block. The terrain is diverse and challenging, and the variety of terrain, geology, and vegetation provide an attractive setting for undeveloped recreation.

Special Features: There are several non-motorized trails providing access to this highly scenic area.

Manageability: The northern boundary is along the High Uintas Wilderness, and is very manageable. Other boundaries are along roads and thirteen excluded road corridors. These corridors and boundaries provide opportunities for visitor access and transfer; however, they also would contribute to difficulties with enforcement. Some boundary modifications could improve manageability if the highest concentration of road corridors and other areas with conflicting uses were excluded from the area.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 524 acres (1 percent) primitive, 24,170 acres (50 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 14,364 acres (29 percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 9,793 acres (20 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

ATV riding is allowed only on Forest Roads 222, 652, 140, 121, 171, 315 and 521 within excluded corridors. Other dispersed recreation activities are concentrated in the Miners Gulch drainage, lower Dry Canyon area, along Dry Ridge Road in South Fork Rock Creek, Fairway Loop area, upper Blind Stream, and along the trail system open to non-motorized travel.

The potential wilderness area is open to cross country travel by over-snow motorized vehicles except for Forest Road 134. Most cross-country travel by snowmobiles takes place between Blind Stream road and the ridges above the North Fork of the Duchesne River and on roads in excluded corridors. Much of the remaining area is inaccessible to snowmobiles due to steep terrain and dense forests.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed bighorn sheep habitat improvement projects in the Lake Fork River drainage. A combination of prescribed fire and mechanical vegetation treatments would be used to improve habitat and encourage the reestablishment of bighorn sheep.

Water: Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) withdrawals include the west facing slopes of Rock Creek Canyon east of Upper Stillwater Reservoir, a one mile corridor along Stillwater Tunnel, a separate 200 foot corridor for the tunnel, several water feeder pipelines with inlet/outlet structures located near the Stillwater Tunnel in the vicinity of the reservoir, and the west facing slopes of North Fork Duchesne River Canyon and water structures in Hades Canyon. According to BOR officials, the withdrawal reserves these lands for activities consistent with the construction, operation, and maintenance water storage and power production facilities in the future.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of Dry Ridge, North Fork Duchesne, Rock Creek, and Pigeon Water allotments are in the area. Fences and water developments are also within the area, and motorized vehicle access is allowed for their maintenance.

Timber: 5,732 acres meet Forest guidelines for lands generally suitable for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development potential is low based on data on file with the Bureau of Land Management and US Geological Survey.

Mining claims are located in the upper reaches of Peterson Gulch and Dry Canyon. No mining has taken place to date, but primary drilling is proposed in Dry Canyon and along access on an unclassified road.

Heritage: No prehistoric surveys have been done and no sites are on record.

Land Use Authorizations: Three outfitter/guide permits cover outfitting and guiding use of portions of the potential wilderness area.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: High Uintas C potential wilderness area is part of the Western High Uintas ecosystem subsection, and has South Face, Dry Moraine, Parks Plateau, Glacial Bottoms, Glacial Canyons, Limestone Plateau, Uinta Bollie, and Alpine Moraine landtype associations. The area has potential habitat for lynx and wolverine. The vegetation, geology, and other characteristics are similar to those characteristics in the High Uintas, and are well represented in the NWPS.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. Pressure on other areas may be reduced and recreation offered by the NWPS would be enhanced if the area were designated as wilderness because the area has unique and interesting features and is adjacent to existing wilderness.

Public Input: Local government groups commented on the need to retain options for water developments and storage in the area. They also commented on the area’s potential for multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, wildlife, and water developments.

The High Uintas Preservation Council commented that the area should be combined with six nearby potential wilderness areas to consider as one large recommended addition to the High Uintas Wilderness. They state that the combined area would have improved wilderness capability and potential to improve the ecological diversity of the High Uintas Wilderness. Utah Environmental Congress provided similar comments.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with minor and concentrated effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and motorized activities along boundary and in excluded road corridors. There are opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by the number and distribution of excluded road corridors, and could be improved with different boundaries.

Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals. Other concerns are the acres with potential for timber harvest, permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and motorized travel opportunities.

Need is moderate because the area is similar to existing wilderness and would not add to ecological representation; however, it would add desirable recreation settings.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401301	High Uintas C	48,851	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Rhoades Canyon Potential Wilderness No. 401302 6,137 Acres

Rhoades Canyon potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of Lightning Ridge Roadless Area # 01011.

DESCRIPTION

Location and Access: The area is located in Duchesne (6,119 acres) and Wasatch (18 acres) Counties, Utah, about 30 air miles northwest of Duchesne. Access is available from Forest Roads 114 (North Fork Duchesne), 174 (Rhoades Canyon), and 317 (Lightening Ridge) from its excluded corridor.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 8,600 feet in the south to 10,000 feet in the north. Lightning Ridge divides the area into drainages to the North Fork Duchesne River on the east and to Rhoades Canyon on the west. The steep slopes east of Lightning Ridge are underlain by Red Pine shale and mantled in places by a thin veneer of quartzite and limestone. The terrain is steep to rolling with sandstone and limestone canyon sides to the west of Lightning Ridge. Vegetative cover across Lightning Ridge consists of Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, and aspen, lodgepole pine with scattered Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir, mixed Douglas-fir/common juniper/aspen/limber pine, and mountain shrubs.

The North Fork Duchesne River valley has wet stream bottomlands, flood plains, and lower terraces with marshes, meadows, brush fields, and spruce bottoms. Further south the vegetative cover changes to sage/grass, mixed mountain shrub, aspen and Rocky Mountain juniper.

A variety of wildlife species occupy and frequent the area. Summer and winter habitat is available for deer, elk, and moose. Mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and birds of prey also use the area. Streams in the area contain habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout. North Fork Duchesne River is stocked with rainbow trout, and has habitat for brown trout, white fish, and Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Existing Activities: The area is used for a variety of recreational activities, including ATV riding on open routes, grazing, and water collection for downstream irrigation and a water feeder pipeline from Hades Canyon to the North Fork Duchesne River Canyon. The Stillwater underground tunnel crosses below the area from the northeast at the reservoir to the southwest.

Surroundings: The area is separated from High Uintas C by a corridor around facilities and private lands along Forest Road 144 and along the North Fork Duchesne River. The southern boundary is the boundary between Forest and private lands.

Iron Mine campground, Hades campground, Aspen campground, and Stockmore Guard Station are located outside the western boundary. Residences, ranches, and Defas Dude Ranch are located on private lands along Forest Road 114 outside the eastern boundary.



Vicinity Map

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: The natural integrity is high, with minimal effects from livestock grazing, fish stocking, and other activities.

Undeveloped Character: There are minimal effects to the character from the allowed motorized uses on excluded roads, the presence of unclassified roads, the few allotment developments, and the water tunnel.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area is affected by the sights, sounds, and smells from activities along the North Fork Duchesne River and in Rhoades canyon. Encounters with other visitors are only frequent near the boundaries. The terrain does provide separation, screening and/or challenge in some areas. A non-motorized trail provides access from Hades Campground located along the eastern boundary to the upper Trail Hollow area.

Special Features: The geology and history of the area could provide for outdoor education.

Manageability: The boundaries can be described and located, and the terrain along the perimeter roads would deter nonconforming uses in many locations. Boundary adjustments could improve the location but would likely reduce the area's size below the minimum for wilderness recommendation.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 3,075 acres (50 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 1,901 acres (31percent) semi-primitive motorized, and 1,161 acres (19 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

Recreation activities mainly take place along the North Fork Duchesne River, the lower slopes of Rhodes Canyon, and the Spruce Springs Reservoir area. Activities outside of these areas are limited by lack of trails, steep slopes and heavy tree and brush cover.

ATV riding occurs on the Rhoades Canyon Road and the road corridor in the Spruce Springs Reservoir area.

Although the potential wilderness area is open to cross country over-snow motorized vehicle travel, most of this use occurs along the Rhoades Canyon Road and the road corridor in the Spruce Springs Reservoir area. There are no snowmobile trails within the potential wilderness area.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed projects in the North Fork Duchesne River drainage to improve habitat and encourage the reestablishment of bighorn sheep (a Uinta Mountain native) in the Uinta Mountains. These projects would include a combination of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments, and would be completed in about 2010.

Water: A Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) withdrawal occupies the majority of the potential wilderness area.

The BOR Hades Tunnel Withdrawal occupies a two hundred foot wide corridor from the North Fork Siphon in North Fork Duchesne River Canyon near the eastern boundary of the potential wilderness area to Rhoades Canyon on the west side of the potential wilderness area. Part of the BOR water feeder pipeline from Hades Canyon to the North Fork Siphon in North Fork Duchesne River Canyon is located within the eastern boundary of the potential wilderness area.

Rhoades Canal is authorized by permit.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of Rhoades Canyon and North Fork Duchesne allotments are in the area. Motorized access is allowed for maintaining fences and water developments

Timber: The area has 511 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held. There is a low grade phosphate deposit near the southern boundary.

Heritage: No prehistoric surveys have been done and no sites are on record. The oldest canal on the Forest, Rhoades Canal, is located along the eastern edge of the area.

Land Use Authorizations: No additional authorizations were identified.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Rhoades Canyon potential wilderness area is part of the Kamas Uplands ecological subsection, and has South Face, Glacial Canyons, Glacial Basins, and Wolf Plateau landtype associations. There is potential lynx habitat and marginal wolverine habitat in the area. The area has ecological characteristics similar to the High Uintas Wilderness and other wilderness areas.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. The area has terrain and features which would attract wilderness visitors; it may help reduce pressure on existing wilderness if designated.

Public Input: Local government groups commented on the need to retain options for water developments and storage in the area. They also commented on the area’s potential for multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, wildlife and water developments, and its high value for providing developed recreation.

Utah Environmental Congress considers the area exceptional (Level C in their rating system), based on its wildlife habitat and heavily forested area, but reduced from Level B due to its small size.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability is high, with concentrated effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and motorized activities along boundary and in excluded road corridors. There are opportunities for solitude and challenge. Manageability is limited by the number and distribution of excluded road corridors, and could be improved with different boundaries.

Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals. Other concerns are permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and cross-country snowmobile travel.

Need is moderate because the area is similar to existing wilderness and would not add to ecological representation; however, it would add desirable wilderness recreation settings.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401302	Rhoades Canyon	6,137	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed

Big Ridge Potential Wilderness No. 401303 22,214 Acres

Big Ridge potential wilderness area was evaluated for wilderness suitability in 1983 as a part of Hell Hole Roadless Area # 01010.

DESCRIPTION

Locations and Access: The area is located in Duchesne County, Utah, about 27 air miles northwest of Duchesne. Access is available from Forest Roads 134 (Rock Creek-Blind Stream), 198 (McAfee Basin), 417 (Rock Lake), 135 (Blind Stream), 197 (Log Hollow) and 199 (Big Ridge), and from excluded corridors along Forest Road 199 for 5.5 miles, and Forest Road 417 for 1.25 miles.

Physical and Biological Descriptions:

Elevations range from 8,600 feet to 11,300 feet. The terrain is mostly steep and highly dissected, with surface rocks and boulders common.

A mix of lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir is the dominant overstory in the north. Rolling uplands above about 10,800 feet, composed of limestone and gravel, are covered by alpine sedges forbs, and stunted Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Cirque basins with scattered spruce and subalpine fir are found in Log Hollow and Big Ridge near the center of the area. Hummocky lower canyon slopes are underlain by the Manning Canyon Shale in parts of Lake Basin.

The southern half of the area has steep slopes that are mostly covered by boulders and trees. Broad, open drainage ways are widely spaced throughout these slopes. Dominant overstory includes Douglas-fir, aspen, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce and lodgepole pine. Lower slopes in this area consist of moderately steep terrain, with mountain big sagebrush/grass ground cover. Fire occurrence is moderately low over most of the potential wilderness area.

A variety of wildlife species occupy and frequent the area. Summer and winter habitat is available for deer, elk, and moose. Mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and birds of prey also use the area. Streams in the area contain habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Existing Activities: The area is used for livestock grazing, and for dispersed recreation, particularly along Forest Road 135, and in Log Hollow, Wedge Hold, Burnt Ridge, and Upper Basin areas.

Surroundings: The area is separated from High Uintas C potential wilderness area on the north and Rhoades Canyon potential wilderness area on the west by corridors along classified roads, and is bordered by private lands on the south.

Upper Stillwater Reservoir Dam, diversion, and underground tunnel diversion are located north and west of the area. Also along the northern boundary are Upper Stillwater Administrative Site (FS visitor center/quarters, parking facilities, warehouse), Yellowstone campground, Miners Gulch campground,



Vicinity Map

Fisherman's Day Use Area, Rock Creek (guest) Ranch on private land, a private ranch and fishing ponds, and Lower Stillwater Fishing Ponds. Five trailheads along roads provide for visitor transfer to trails into the area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity: The area has been slightly affected by livestock grazing and non-native fish.

Undeveloped Character: The area has been slightly affected by developments associated with Stillwater Reservoir and tunnel, by livestock grazing, and by the presence and motorized uses of unclassified roads and trails.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area is influenced by sights, sounds, and smells from developments and uses along the boundaries; however the terrain does provide solitude in several areas and offers challenge. Encounters with other visitors are common along the boundaries and along excluded road corridors.

Special Features: Trails 069, 143, 083, and 084 facilitate non-motorized travel in the area.

Manageability: About half of the boundary lies along corridors of classified roads, and could be identified on the ground. There are two excluded road corridors which reduce manageability. The area is separated from other potential wilderness by road corridors, and if it were combined with these the overall capability would be improved. The terrain in many locations limits uses which would be incompatible with wilderness. The roads along the boundary and in excluded corridors provide opportunities for visitor transfer.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area is mapped as 8,363 acres (38 percent) semi-primitive non-motorized, 10,912 acres (50 percent) semi-primitive motorized and 2,939 acres (12 percent) roaded natural ROS classes.

ATV riding is permitted on excluded Forest Road 199 (Big Ridge) within the potential wilderness area and trail connecting Forest Roads 199 and 417 in the Rock Lake area. Unclassified roads are in the potential wilderness area; some of these are open to use by ATVs and standard automobiles.

The area is open to cross country over-snow motorized vehicle travel. Most use takes place on existing classified and unclassified roads in the southeastern part of the area.

Wildlife: The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has proposed bighorn sheep habitat improvement projects, which would include a combination of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments.

Water: A Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal is located within and along the northern boundary of the potential wilderness area from Upper Stillwater Reservoir west to the Lake Basin area.

Livestock Grazing: Parts of Log Hollow, McAfee Basin, Blind Stream, and Rock Creek allotments are in the area. Range fences and spring developments, and grazing are found in the Lake Basin area, along the south facing slopes in the southern half of the area, and in the Upper Basin area. Motorized vehicle access to developments is allowed for maintenance.

Timber: The area has 4,830 acres with potential for timber harvest.

Minerals/Oil & Gas: Oil and gas discovery and development, and probability of locatable minerals are low. There are no existing mineral activities located in the area, and there are no acres in the area where private mineral rights are held.

Heritage: There is evidence of early 20th century mining and logging sites in the area.

Land Use Authorizations: Two outfitter/guide permits cover outfitting and guiding use of portions of the potential wilderness area.

Other Concerns: None were identified.

NEED

Ecological Contribution: Big Ridge potential wilderness area is part of the Kamas Uplands and Western High Uintas ecological subsections, and has South Face, Limestone Plateau, Uinta Bollie, Alpine Moraine, and Glacial Canyons landtype associations. There is habitat for lynx and wolverine in the area. The area has ecological characteristics similar to the High Uintas Wilderness and other wilderness areas.

Recreational: The majority of Ashley National Forest wilderness visitors are from local communities and the Wasatch front. The area is near local communities, within 200 miles of the Wasatch front, and is accessible from roads. The area has terrain and features which would attract wilderness visitors; it may help reduce pressure on existing wilderness if designated.

Public Input: Local government groups commented on the need to retain options for water developments and storage in the area. They also commented on the area’s potential for multiple uses, including recreation, grazing, timber, wildlife and water developments.

The High Uintas Preservation Council commented that the area should be combined with six nearby potential wilderness areas to consider as one large recommended addition to the High Uintas Wilderness. They state that the combining the areas would improve wilderness capability and have potential to improve the ecological diversity of the High Uintas Wilderness. Utah Environmental Congress provided similar comments, and offered options for combining all or part of the area with parts of adjacent potential wilderness for recommendation.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability: Capability is high, with minor effects from livestock grazing and supporting developments, and the close proximity and motorized use on boundary and included roads yearlong. There are opportunities for solitude, but the area would be difficult to manage as wilderness due to the several miles of surrounding and excluded roads, and activities along the roads.

Availability: Availability is low based on BOR water withdrawals. Other concerns are permitted allotment activities, wildlife management opportunities, and cross-country snowmobile travel.

Need is moderate because the area is similar to existing wilderness and would not add to ecological representation; however, it would add desirable wilderness recreation settings.

Number	Potential Wilderness Area	Acres	Capability	Availability	Need
401303	Big Ridge	22,214	High	Low	Moderate

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

To be completed