

Mount Pennell

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
61,880	10,600	72,480 (86%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
10,480	1,680	12,160 (14%)
Inventory Unit Total		
72,360	12,280	84,640
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Mount Pennell WSA (UT-050-248)		74,300

Most of the five Mount Pennell inventory units (72,480 acres) have wilderness characteristics. This area has a diverse combination of high-elevation piñon and juniper woodlands, incised sandstone canyons, expansive mesas, colorful badlands, and rugged benchlands, providing outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The inventory area includes the headwaters and entire upper drainages of numerous creeks and washes.

Portions of the units (12,160 acres) are disturbed and lack wilderness characteristics. In Units 1, 2, and 3, there are chained woodlands and cherry-stemmed travel routes. Unit 4 contains a large area of disturbance resulting from livestock grazing and mineral exploration.

Unit Description

The five units surround Mount Pennell, the second highest peak of the Henry Mountains at 11,371 feet. When combined with the existing Mount Pennell Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the inventory area is large, about 14 miles north to south and

12 miles wide. The units are located in Garfield County about 30 miles south of Hanksville and northwest of the Ticaboo resort area.

The badlands in the southern portion of the units are an expansive, stark landscape of rolling and rugged blue-grey Mancos shale that spreads from the foothills of Mount Pennell south to Clay Point and west to Bullfrog Creek. The northern units contain part of Tarantula Mesa. Tarantula Mesa and Pennell Creek Roughs, just south of No Mans Mesa, are rugged benchlands at middle elevations. Vegetation ranges from annual and perennial grasses and scattered shrubs of shadescale and blackbrush at lower elevations to piñon and juniper woodlands, scrub oak, and small stands of aspen, ponderosa pine, and Douglas fir at higher elevations.

The units have been used primarily for recreation, livestock grazing, and mineral exploration. Hunting is a principal activity; however, sightseeing, rock collecting, and wildlife observation activities are increasing.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The majority of each of the five units retain their natural character and augment the natural character of the Mount Pennell WSA. Rugged terrain, combined with remoteness and limited access, has worked to maintain the units' natural character. Many of the four-wheel drive routes identified on USGS quad maps have become impassable or been obliterated. In most cases, vehicle routes are substantially unnoticeable on the landscape. Of the few areas that have lost their naturalness, most have been impacted by grazing projects or mineral exploration. Several associated

vehicle ways and roads have been cherry-stemmed from the units. However, two vehicle routes within Unit 5 that were cherry-stemmed out of the Mount Pennell WSA were later found to have retained their wilderness characteristics.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The units are contiguous to and an extension of the Mount Pennell WSA, which has been determined to have outstanding opportunities for solitude. The units augment the opportunities provided by the WSA. They are part of an extensive, largely undisturbed natural region. This wild and remote landscape stretches from the flanks of Mount Pennell across mesas, canyons, and badlands to the wild lands of the contiguous Capitol Reef National Park. This remote area has ample topographic and vegetative screening to provide abundant opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The units are contiguous to and an extension of the Mount Pennell WSA, which has been determined to possess outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The units augment the opportunities provided by the WSA. There are extensive opportunities for such dispersed, undeveloped recreation activities as hunting, wildlife observation, photography, nature study, camping, and hiking. Extensive scenic vistas, rugged canyons, stark badlands, rolling and broken benchlands, and wooded high country combine to provide an ideal setting for visitors to experience primitive, unconfined recreation.

Supplemental Values

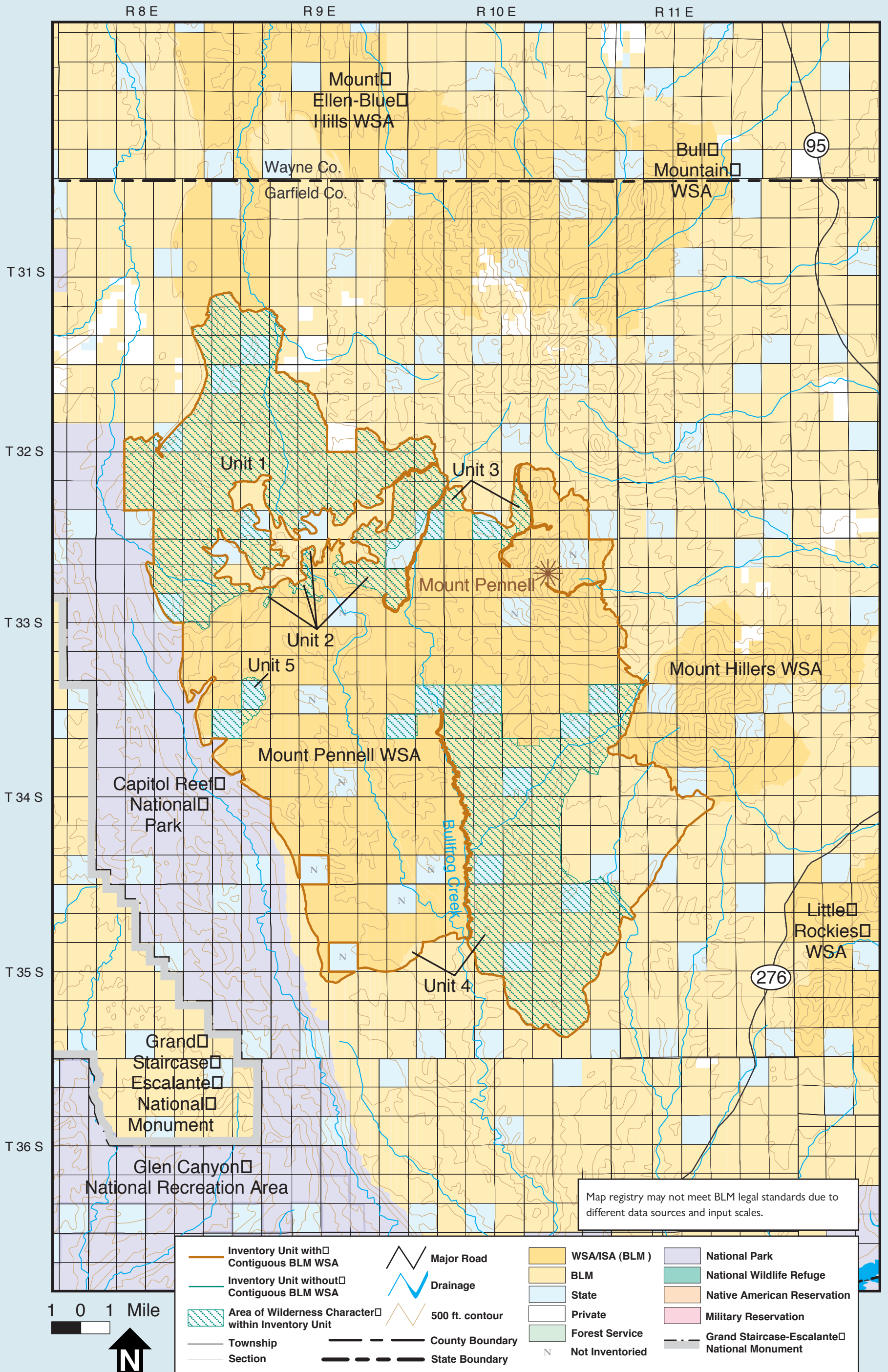
The combination of badlands, mesas, and canyons offer an impressive landscape of geologic diversity, linking the Henry Mountains with the Waterpocket Fold area. At higher elevations, the units contain critical habitat for bison and mule deer. The bison herd in the Henry Mountains is one of the few free-roaming herds in the nation. The badlands and benchlands also provide habitat for the endangered Wright's fishhook cactus and a number of other candidate plant species.

MOUNT PENNELL—The rim of Tarantula Mesa creates an impressive scene as one looks from the Notom Road across the unit toward Mount Ellen.



Jerry Sintz

Mount Pennell



EAST CENTRAL REGION—Mount Pennell