Mount Hillers

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	**State**	**Total**
With Wilderness Characteristics		
1,290	2,590	3,880 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	10	10 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
1,290	2,600	3,890
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Mount Hillers WSA (UT-050-249)		20,000

Most of the five Mount Hillers inventory units (3,880 acres) have wilderness characteristics. Some of the units contain disturbance from mining exploration and vehicle ways, but much of this is substantially unnoticeable, although about 10 acres in Unit 3 were determined to lack wilderness characteristics. The opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are enhanced by the contiguous Mount Hillers Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Unit 4 contains part of a geologic feature called the Pink Cliffs, an outstanding educational and interpretive feature.

Unit Description

The Mount Hillers inventory units are located in Garfield County approximately 35 miles south of Hanksville. The five units are all located at the lower elevations on Mount Hillers and are contiguous to the Mount Hillers WSA. All units contain piñon and juniper woodland, with open areas of grass and shrubs. The units are used for a variety of recreational activities, livestock grazing, and university-level geology field schools. Starr Spring, a BLM campground on the south flank of Mount Hillers, is used as a base camp for climbing the mountain. Unit 1 is located on the northeast slope of Mount Hillers, while Unit 2 is a small parcel north of the Black Table located on Black Creek. Unit 3 is composed of three separate parcels containing the Cocks Comb on the southeast side of the WSA. Unit 4 is a state section north of Cooper Spring on the Indian Benches on the south slopes of the mountain. Finally, Unit 5 consists of two parcels of state land encompassing Cass Creek on the northwest side of Mount Hillers.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the five units retain their natural character. Units 1 and 2 do not contain any intrusions; they have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. A small portion of Unit 3 has been altered by the Gold Creek residential development located in a state land section on old mine workings; this area lacks natural character. The road to Gold Creek Spring is the boundary of the unit; the road that extends north past other mining impacts and then terminate in Section 30 has been cherry-stemmed. The remainder of the unit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Unit 4 appears natural: there are a couple of vehicle ways penetrating the unit, but they are substantially unnoticeable. Two small mining adits are located on a vehicle way that is overgrown, eroded, and no longer passable. An access road on the north boundary of Unit 5 along Cass Creek, as well as the mining cabin and associated development to which the road leads, have been cherry-stemmed from the unit. Otherwise, Unit 5 has the appearance of having been affected only by natural processes.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The units are contiguous to and are an extension of the Mount Hillers WSA, which possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude. The units contain dense stands of piñon and juniper, scattered Douglas fir near Cass Peak, and Gamble's oak, all of which provide screening for visitors. The opportunity for solitude is outstanding only in conjunction with the WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The units are contiguous to and an extension of the Mount Hillers WSA, which possesses outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Unit 4 contains a portion of the Pink Cliffs, a popular hiking destination as well as an educational and interpretive geologic feature. The opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation in the other four units is outstanding only in conjunction with the WSA.

Supplemental Values

Unit 4 contains a portion of the Pink Cliffs, a striking and colorful feature with unique educational and interpretive values. Mount Hillers is an excellent example of the mountain-building geologic forces first described by geologist Grove Karl Gilbert. The underlying sandstone layers are uplifted to a vertical position, with the pink sandstone offering a stark contrast to the surrounding black basalt.

MOUNT HILLERS—Coal Bed Mesa, looking northeast, with Mount Hillers on the right and Mount Pennell on the left.

Jerry Sintz

Mount Hillers