

Little Rockies

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
24,200	7,800	32,000 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
24,200	7,800	32,000
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Little Rockies WSA (UT-050-247)		38,700

All 32,000 acres of the three Little Rockies inventory units have wilderness characteristics. Six roads have been cherry-stemmed out of the inventory units' boundaries, including two roads in Unit 1 that extend from Utah Highway 276 to a small stock reservoir on Trachyte Point and to Maidenwater Reservoir; one road in Unit 2 that extends from Utah Highway 276 to a leased parcel of state land containing a small corral and barn; and three roads in Unit 3, one that extends from Utah Highway 276 to Highway Reservoir, and two that extend from a road on the unit's southern boundary to Colt Spring and Ticaboo Shelf Spring. All other vehicle ways and disturbances are substantially unnoticeable. As an extension of the contiguous Little Rockies Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the units offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Unit 3 is contiguous to the Little Rockies National Natural Landmark, which includes two major peaks in the region, Mount Holmes and Mount Ellsworth. Unit 1 is known for exceptional hiking opportunities as well as for 360-degree panoramic views of the region.

LITTLE ROCKIES—Hog Canyon near the Utah Highway 95 rest stop is easily accessible to the hiker and photographer.

Unit Description

The three Little Rockies inventory units are located in Garfield County about 30 miles southeast of Hanksville between

Utah Highways 276 and 95. They are situated on the north, west, and southwest flanks of the Little Rockies Mountains east of Utah Highway 276. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area lies to the east. The terrain of Unit 1 consists of rolling, open hills and widely scattered rock outcroppings. These hills drain south and east into steeply incised sandstone canyons. Unit 2 consists of open terrain and the headwater canyons of Milk and Swett Creeks on the northwest flank of Mount Holmes. The terrain of Unit 3 contains the headwater drainages of several washes and creeks on the west and southwest flanks of Mount Ellsworth. Vegetation in all units is sparse, with scattered junipers and desert-shrub species (sage, blackbrush, and Mormon tea) on the higher terrain, and cottonwood, tamarisk and willow in canyon wash riparian areas. Ranching is a principal use within the area, as is recreational access to the hiking opportunities that exist both in the upper reaches of the canyons and on the peaks of the Little Rockies Mountains.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Even though Utah Highway 276 and a portion of Utah Highway 95 lie immediately adjacent, the three units are a natural-appearing landscape because of the area's rugged and diverse terrain that has, by and large, limited the number of human intrusions. Vehicle access is limited to several four-wheel-drive ways traversing the rolling hills, benchlands, and washes near Utah Highway 276. These vehicle ways are not maintained and are impassable for

the most part; vehicle tracks and evidence of use have been erased by seasonal rains and shifting sands. Occasional tracks and intrusions on the interior of the units are remnants of seismographic survey lines and mineral exploration completed decades ago. Several short roads extend to range improvements, small stock reservoirs, and old mining claims or drill holes, but these have been cherry-stemmed out of the inventory units' boundaries. Livestock grazing activities have not altered the natural appearance of the area; all impacts are substantially unnoticeable in the landscape.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The three inventory units are contiguous to and are an extension of the Little Rockies WSA, which provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. In combination with this WSA, the inventory units provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The three inventory units are contiguous to and are an extension of the Little Rockies WSA, which provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. In combination with this WSA, the inventory units provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities include photographing and exploring the wild and remote canyons, as well as other areas of geologic and scenic interest. Hiking opportunities in Unit 1, easily accessible from both Utah Highways 276 and 95, include 360-degree scenic views in the spectacular Maidenwater Sands and Canyon area, Hog Canyon, and the Trachyte Point area.

Supplemental Values

Inventory Unit 3 is contiguous to the Little Rockies National Natural Landmark, which includes two major peaks in the region, Mount Holmes and Mount Ellsworth. It is likely that a variety of prehistoric occupation or hunting sites may be located in the units, based on their proximity to the culturally rich Glen Canyon National Recreation Area that lies adjacent. The presence of golden eagles has been reported, and the units also provide habitat for desert bighorn sheep. Hole in the Rock prairie clover (*Dalea epica*) is found within the southern portion of the inventory area.



Jerry Sintz

Little Rockies

