

Limestone Cliffs

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
23,800	3,800	27,600 (99%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
200	100	300 (1%)
Inventory Unit Total		
24,000	3,900	27,900
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 27,600 acres of the Limestone Cliffs inventory unit has wilderness characteristics. Sweeping vistas of multi-colored Entrada Sandstone and Mancos Shale cliffs cascade down to desert canyons dotted with volcanic boulders and columns of pinnacles. The remote, rugged terrain of the upper mesas, forested in piñon and juniper and home to mule deer, elk, and antelope, transitions into the adjacent roadless area of Fishlake National Forest. Most of the area remains natural, offering both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation to the visitor. However, about 300 acres lack these qualities. Two private inholdings and an access road have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Unit Description

The Limestone Cliffs inventory unit is located in the southeast corner of Sevier County, with two small parcels in Emery County. Privately owned Last Chance Ranch skirts the east-central boundary and an old jeep road provides access to a

remote parcel along Solomon Creek. Other private lands located in Rock Springs Wash, Solomon Creek, and Clay Flats border the northwest section of the unit. The two internal private parcels have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

The unit is bordered on the west by a roadless portion of the Fishlake National Forest. Utah Highway 72 borders the unit for two miles along the northwest. The rest of the unit is bordered by county-maintained roads. Remnants of an early attempt at coal mining are still visible along the northern border. The eastern boundary road provides access to the northern section of Capitol Reef National Park's Cathedral Valley.

Elk, antelope, and deer migrate between winter and summer range throughout this unit. The primary use of the land is for recreation and livestock grazing. Views from the higher elevations reward the visitor with spectacular landscapes, including the San Rafael Swell and the Henry Mountains to the south.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The Limestone Cliffs inventory unit has largely retained its natural character because of its remoteness, limited access, and rugged terrain. Vehicle access is by maintained county roads bordering the north, east, and south. Intrusions consist of grazing facilities and access ways that are old, not maintained, and substantially unnoticeable.

Naturalness has been impaired in the northwest near Sign Board Flat, where

access has been maintained to several chained juniper areas and stock ponds. These developments are located between the road and the bluffs to the south. In the far northeast are remnants of an old coal mining town.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit has deeply incised canyons, including Temple Wash, Solomon Creek, and Last Chance Creek; rugged terrain; and moderate to dense stands of piñon and juniper. Topographic relief exceeds 2,000 feet and the rugged terrain is difficult to traverse. This topographic and vegetative screening offers outstanding opportunities for solitude within this seldom-visited region.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The unit offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Diverse landforms lure the occasional photographer, hiker, backpacker, wildlife viewer, and sightseer to explore and experience a primitive area in an unconfined setting.

Supplemental Values

The endangered Wright's fishhook cactus (*Sclerocactus wrightiae*) may be present in the area.

LIMESTONE CLIFFS—Rugged terrain and vegetative screening offer the visitor outstanding opportunities for solitude within this seldom-visited region.



Jerry Sintz

Limestone Cliffs

