

Upper Muddy Creek

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
18,100	2,200	20,300 (93%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
1,100	500	1,600 (7%)
Inventory Unit Total		
19,200	2,700	21,900
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 20,300 acres of the Upper Muddy Creek inventory unit have wilderness characteristics. Human imprints in this portion of the unit, including minor intrusions (access ways and livestock grazing facilities), are generally located along the county road, leaving the interior roadless and natural appearing. However, about 1,600 acres lack wilderness characteristics.

The core of the inventory area, with its diverse landscape divided by the Muddy Creek drainage, provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. A segment of Muddy Creek that runs through the unit is eligible for inclusion as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Unit Description

The Upper Muddy Creek inventory unit is located south of Interstate 70 in Emery County approximately 10 miles southeast of the town of Emery and approximately 45 miles west of Green River. It is bordered by Interstate 70 (and a small parcel of private land along Muddy Creek) on the north, South Salt Wash on the east, and county-maintained roads on the east, south, and west.

Most of the unit includes varied, broken landscape features, including long mesas, buttes, ridges, and colorful badland formations cut by numerous drainages. This area is particularly impressive with its colorful display of badland formations and mineral deposits. The area contains a sparse but diverse landscape of incised plateaus bordered by flatlands. Protection has been afforded a portion of the unit through designation of the I-70 Scenic Corridor Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Human uses include livestock grazing, mineral exploration, and recreation.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the Upper Muddy Creek inventory unit is natural. Intrusions occur around the fringe of the unit, but most are substantially unnoticeable. Faint vehicle ways penetrate the unit a mile or so, but without use these would disappear. Two short

UPPER MUDDY CREEK—Volcanic fins add to the scenic geologic features of the area, providing opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation activities.



Jerry Sintz

roads have been cherry-stemmed from the unit. A number of maintained stock ponds are found mostly within the unit's southern portion, with a few scattered around its edges elsewhere. A couple of drift fences and a corral are also present around the perimeter. Mineral exploration has occurred within the north-central portion of the unit. An abandoned mine and its associated impacts are not natural in appearance; two other areas impacted by off-highway vehicle use and livestock grazing are also unnatural.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The interior of this unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, given the diverse, broken topography that is riddled with buttes and mesas, and dissected by numerous washes and small canyons. While the elevation change generally is not greater than 400 feet from canyon bottoms to the tops of the buttes and benches, the serrated nature of the landscape and the elevated features that surround the interior provide more than ample topographic screening to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, particularly for those floating Muddy Creek or hiking into any of the interesting interior drainages.

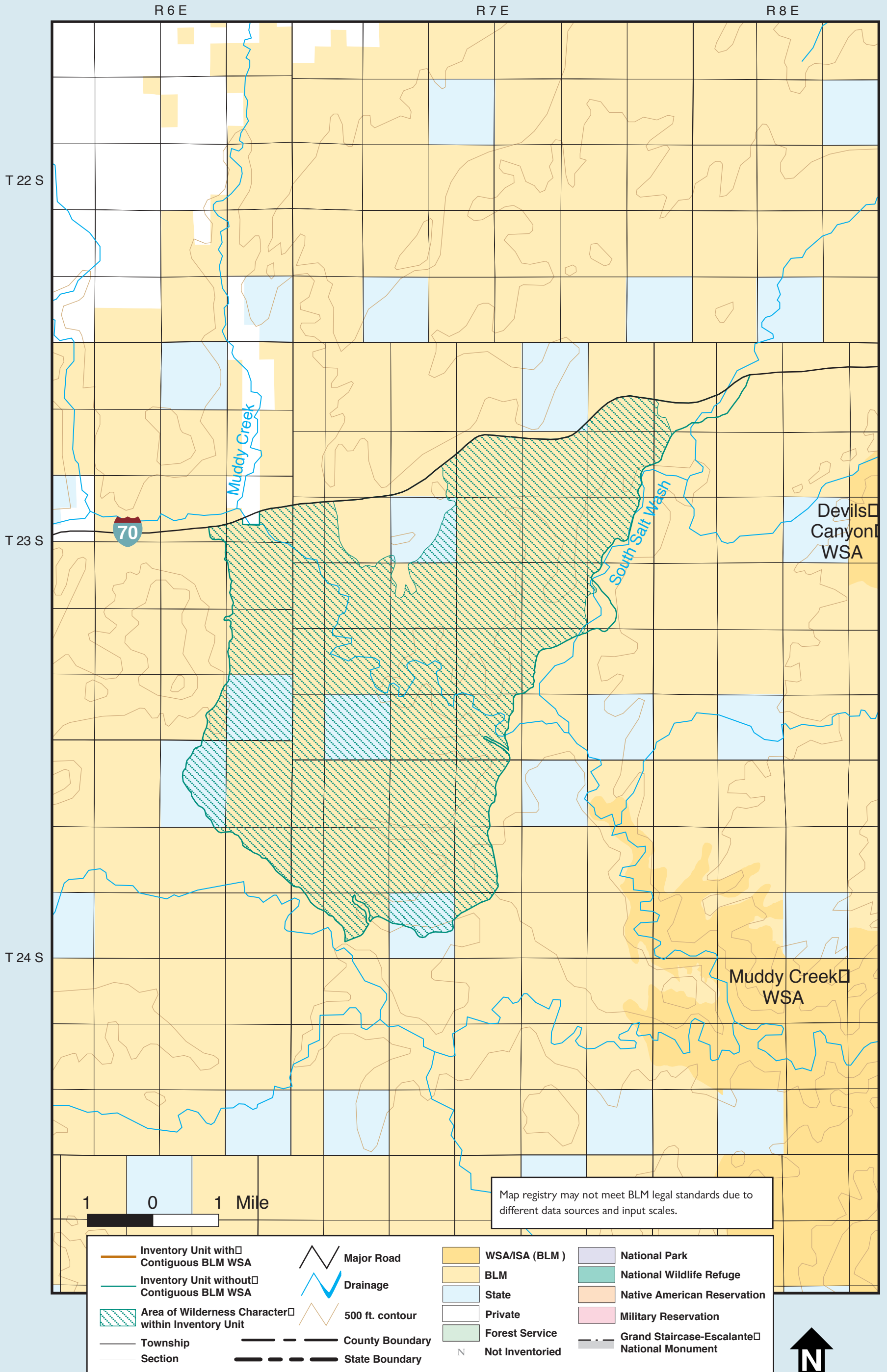
Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

This unit offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities abound for hiking, rock-hounding, photography, geologic sightseeing, and even boating within the colorful canyons and plateaus in the interior of the unit. River running opportunities occur along Muddy Creek during the high spring-runoff period. This float is becoming increasingly popular and is included in at least one river rafting guidebook as an outstanding run. The first 10 miles of the 70-mile run are included within the Upper Muddy Creek unit.

Supplemental Values

Supplemental values within the unit predominantly focus around the scenic values of its interesting geologic features. Of particular interest is the presence of lengthy volcanic fins and the colorful mineralogic deposits in the strata, along with the "cone" structures within the interior of the unit. The BLM has identified the segment of Muddy Creek within the unit as being eligible for inclusion as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

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EAST CENTRAL REGION—Upper Muddy Creek