

Floy Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
12,310	6,270	18,580 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	40	40 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
12,310	6,310	18,620
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Floy Canyon WSA (UT-060-068B)		72,605
Desolation Canyon WSA (UT-060-068A)		290,845

About 18,580 acres of the ten Floy Canyon inventory units have wilderness characteristics, while about 40 acres are unnatural and lacking in wilderness characteristics because of impacts from concentrated hunting and outfitting use. Nearly all of the ten units are in a natural condition with little or no evidence of human presence. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are outstanding throughout, with topographic and vegetative screening providing many places to be alone. The inventory units contain long and deep canyons, unusual geologic features, visual diversity, and a variety of wildlife species. Wilderness values are enhanced by the contiguous Desolation Canyon and Floy Canyon Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The Floy Canyon and Desolation Canyon inventory units are physically connected at the end of the Right Hand Tusher Canyon Road within the state section, adjacent to the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation.

Unit Description

The Floy Canyon inventory units are in Grand County about nine miles northeast of Green River. A county-maintained road up Right Hand Tusher Canyon to the state section at the upper end of the canyon defines the northwest boundary. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation bounds the north side. A high-standard all-season road runs up Segó Canyon and bounds the east side. A railroad right-of-way, roads, and private lands form the southern boundary.

Located in the northeastern portion of the Colorado-Plateau Province/Ecoregion, the Floy Canyon inventory units are extremely rugged with few vehicle ways. Except for Hatch and Horse Mesas, the units lie between the face of the Book Cliffs and

the top of the Roan Cliffs. Narrow, steep ridges and deep V-shaped canyons are characteristic of the area. Five large canyons—Horse Canyon, Middle Horse Canyon, Floy Canyon, Thompson Canyon, and Crescent Canyon—as well as many smaller canyons make up the WSAs and inventory units. Hatch Mesa and Horse Mesa are distinctive landforms.

Vegetation on the lower slopes is predominantly piñon and juniper woodland and high-desert plant communities. Deep within the canyons and high on the upper slopes are Douglas fir, mountain mahogany, oak scrub, sagebrush, and mountain shrubs. Riparian communities exist in the canyon bottoms, while Hatch Mesa and Horse Mesa are covered with low-desert grasses and shrubs. A year-round population of elk lives in the inventory units. Deer, mountain lions, black bears, golden eagles, and other wildlife species also inhabit the area, and mountain beavers thrive in the canyon bottoms. Grazing and hunting are the current land uses.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Nearly all of the Floy Canyon inventory units retain their natural character. Only a small part of Unit 10 in the northeast corner is unnatural because of impacts created by concentrated hunting and outfitting use.

Units 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 have natural character. The vehicle way into Showerbath Canyon in Unit 5 has been cherry-stemmed; this cherry-stem includes the old cabin and corrals. Beyond this point, vehicles travel in the wash in the canyon bottom.

Hatch Mesa and Horse Mesa are found in Unit 6. Several unnoticeable vehicle ways and a stock pond west of Horse Mesa are found in the unit. In the northeast corner, a road was constructed up a small ridge to gain access to mining claims; however, this road is recovering naturally and is now substantially unnoticeable.

A small-game guzzler adjacent to the boundary road in Unit 8 and a wildlife guzzler adjacent to the southern boundary road in Unit 9 are substantially unnoticeable. Only the area in Unit 10 above the

8,400 foot contour is unnatural, given the impacts from concentrated hunting and outfitting.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding. The size, configuration, topographic features, and dense vegetative screening throughout the units enhance the opportunities for solitude. There are more than 50 miles of canyons within the contiguous WSAs and the inventory units that range from 100 feet to over 1,000 feet in depth. There are numerous locations where a person can experience a sense of isolation and remoteness.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive or unconfined recreation are outstanding throughout the contiguous WSAs and the inventory units. The extensive system of canyons, ridges, and pack trails provides numerous opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, and other forms of primitive recreation.

Supplemental Values

Topographic features that enhance the scenic values of the inventory units include colorful rock outcrops, spires, balanced rocks, chimneys, narrow steep-walled canyons, and the dramatic cliffs surrounding Hatch and Horse Mesas. Scenic vistas, where it seems one can see for 100 miles in every direction, are outstanding.

Cultural values include historic cabins and related trails. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, cougar, elk, black bear, and deer inhabit the area. Endangered black-footed ferrets, peregrine falcons and bald eagles, along with six other animal species considered sensitive, are also found.

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