

Spruce Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
2,320	2,640	4,960 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
2,320	2,640	4,960
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Spruce Canyon WSA (UT-060-100C1)		20,990
Coal Canyon WSA (UT-060-100C2)		61,430
Flume Canyon WSA (UT-060-100B)		50,800

All 4,960 acres of the four Spruce Canyon inventory units have wilderness characteristics. Each of the four units is in a natural condition with little or no evidence of human presence. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are outstanding throughout the inventory units because of thick vegetative cover and the many side canyons that drain into Cottonwood and Diamond Canyons on the perimeter of the contiguous Spruce Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

The units contain wilderness-enhancing values such as portions of several long and deep canyons, unusual geologic features, visual diversity, and diverse habitats that support a variety of wildlife species. The upper portions of the WSA boundary roads in Diamond and Cottonwood Canyons have returned to a natural state.

Unit Description

The Spruce Canyon inventory units are located north of Interstate 70 in Grand County about 43 miles northeast of Green River, Utah. In association with the Spruce Canyon WSA, the units include four small areas composed of both public and state lands. The inventory units lie between the face of the Book Cliffs and the top of the Roan Cliffs. They consist of a landscape dissected by steep ridges and v-shaped valleys. Stands of aspen, Douglas fir, and piñon-juniper woodland cover most of the area. The remainder of the inventory units is covered by mountain shrub, sagebrush, and shadscale vegetation types. A perennial stream and numerous beaver ponds extend most of the length of Cottonwood Canyon. Beaver thrive in the narrow canyon bottoms, building dams and ponds. As a result of this dam building, vehicular access has been blocked in Cottonwood Canyon. Land uses include

livestock grazing, oil and gas exploration and production, and recreation.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

All four of the Spruce Canyon inventory units retain their natural character. No roads, vehicle ways, or other unnatural features were identified within inventory Units 1, 3, or 4. A gas well and the access road up Cottonwood Canyon forms a portion of the southern boundary of Unit 2.

The Spruce Canyon inventory units are contiguous to and are a logical extension of the Spruce Canyon WSA. Unit 1 is also contiguous to the Flume Canyon WSA. The road up Diamond Canyon, which is the boundary for the Flume Canyon WSA, has disappeared into the underbrush beyond the confluence of Halfway and Diamond Canyons. Units 2 and 3 are contiguous to the Coal Canyon WSA. The boundary road up Cottonwood Canyon between these two units and the Coal Canyon WSA has faded into the natural character of the canyon, becoming nonexistent.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The three contiguous WSAs possess outstanding opportunities for solitude, and the four inventory units enhance those opportunities. Portions of numerous canyons, including Halfway, Tepee, and Cherry, are within the inventory units. Ridges provide excellent topographic

SPRUCE CANYON—Numerous ridges and canyons, including Halfway Canyon, provide excellent topographic screening, with heavy forest vegetation further enhancing the opportunities for seclusion.



BLM photo

screening, with the dense woodlands further enhancing opportunities for seclusion. The scenic vistas from the ridges within the units enhance the sense of isolation.

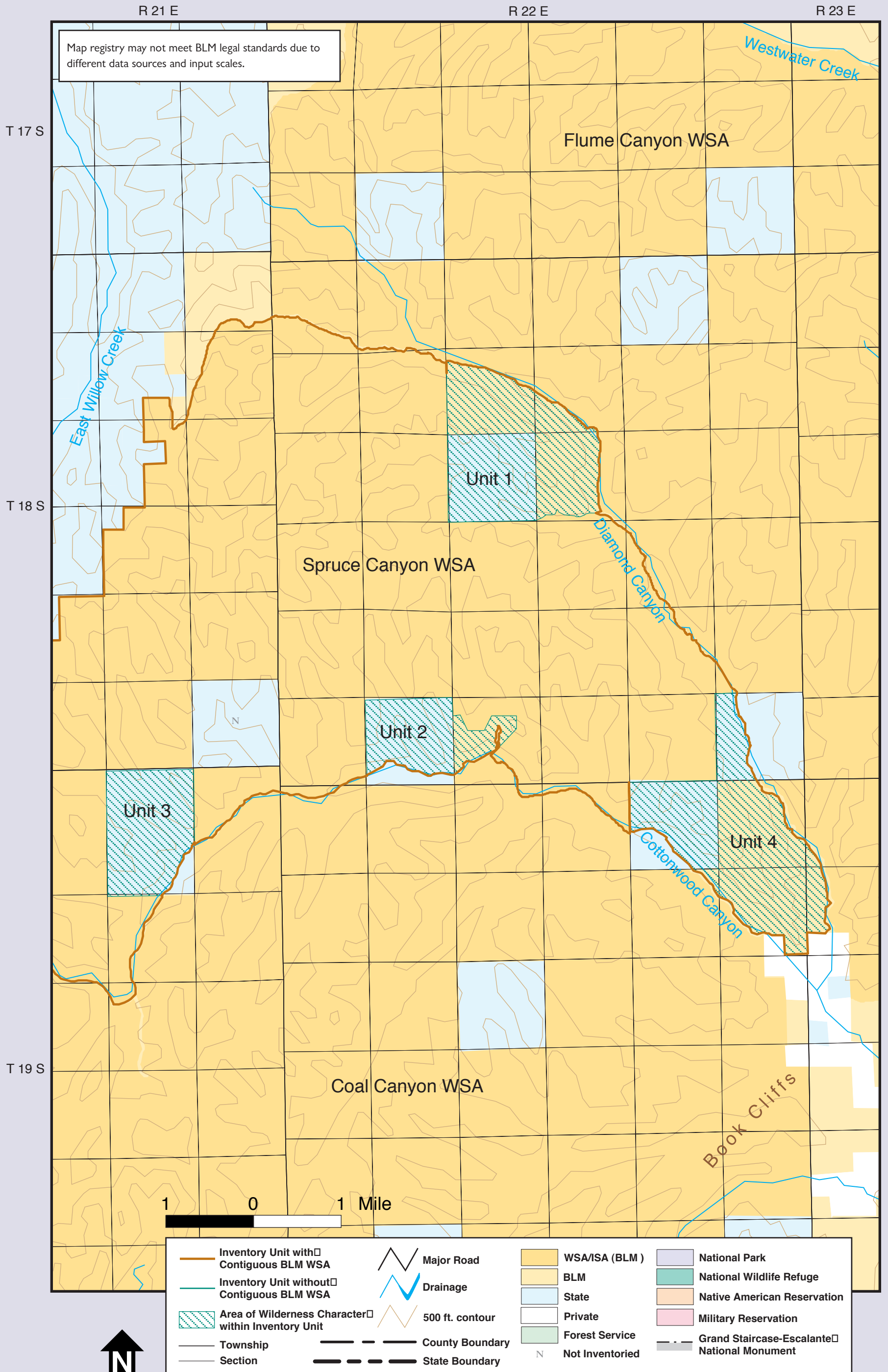
Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for unconfined and primitive forms of recreation are outstanding throughout the inventory units. The Spruce Canyon inventory units are contiguous to and are logical extensions of the Spruce Canyon WSA. Because the boundaries between the Spruce Canyon WSA and the Coal Canyon and Flume Canyon WSAs are no longer evident on the ground, Units 1, 2, and 3 blend into the contiguous WSAs, further enhancing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The system of canyons and ridges provides numerous opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, and other forms of primitive recreation.

Supplemental Values

The Spruce Canyon inventory units are part of the largest continuous escarpment in the world—the Roan Cliffs and Book Cliffs. The contiguous Spruce Canyon WSA is itself contiguous to a state roadless area on its western boundary. From the top of the steep-walled canyons, a visitor can see dramatic scenic vistas in every direction. Beaver have reclaimed much of the canyon bottoms and restored natural processes by building ponds in Cottonwood Canyon. Cougar, elk, black bear, and deer inhabit the area. Endangered black-footed ferrets, peregrine falcons, and bald eagles, as well as six other animal species that are considered sensitive, may occur in or near the inventory units.

Spruce Canyon



NORTHEAST REGION—Spruce Canyon