

Moonshine Draw

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
2,700	0	2,700 (69%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
1,100	100	1,200 (31%)
Inventory Unit Total		
3,800	100	3,900
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Dinosaur National Monument		

The western portion of the Moonshine Draw inventory unit (2,700 acres) has wilderness characteristics and is contiguous to a portion of Dinosaur National Monument that has been administratively endorsed for wilderness by the National Park Service (NPS). It is in a natural condition and offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation when considered in conjunction with the NPS proposal. However, the eastern portion of the unit (1,200 acres) does not have wilderness characteristics because of numerous vehicle ways, fences, and reservoirs associated with livestock grazing. It also lacks the topographic and vegetative screening found further west.

Unit Description

The unit is in eastern Uintah County about 25 air miles east of Vernal. The deeply etched Moonshine Draw and Bear Hollow, as well as the open Yampa

Plateau, are the main topographic features of this unit, which is used primarily by hunters, hikers, and ranchers.

The unit is an extension of the lands proposed for wilderness within Dinosaur National Monument. It contains the portion of Ruple Ridge that drops down into the deeply cut Moonshine Draw, which continues through the NPS lands and empties into the Green River at Moonshine Rapids. Elevations range from about 7,600 feet on the plateau tops to 6,000 feet in the bottom of Moonshine Draw. The open plateaus give way to areas heavily wooded with piñon and juniper. There are also small pockets of ponderosa pine in the south.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Much of the unit retains its natural character, given the few intrusions, its rugged terrain, and the difficult access. The wooded portions of Moonshine Draw and Bear Hollow are exceptionally natural and scenic. In the natural-appearing area, there is less than one mile of vehicle way, a short section of fence, and a small corral, none of which are substantially noticeable. The eastern portion of the unit is unnatural because of an accumulation of intrusions: numerous livestock reservoirs that are regularly maintained, a number of vehicle access routes, and several miles of fence. A 1.75-mile road has been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit is contiguous to a portion of Dinosaur National Monument that is proposed for wilderness, and it enhances the opportunities for solitude found on these contiguous NPS lands. The extremely rugged landscape of Moonshine Draw and other smaller draws provides topographic screening. Vegetation found throughout much of the unit also screens visitors from each other. Opportunities for solitude are outstanding only in conjunction with the contiguous NPS lands.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Moonshine Draw inventory unit is contiguous to and an extension of lands within Dinosaur National Monument. The inventory unit enhances the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation found on these NPS lands. Hiking, backpacking, hunting, camping, and viewing of expansive scenic vistas are all opportunities provided within the Moonshine Draw inventory unit. These opportunities are outstanding only in conjunction with the contiguous NPS lands.

Supplemental Values

The unit contains habitat for the Mexican spotted owl, peregrine falcon, spotted and big free-tail bats, and the Utah milk snake. These are all State and BLM sensitive species.

MOONSHINE DRAW—Looking down Moonshine Draw towards the contiguous Dinosaur National Monument.



BLM photo

Moonshine Draw

