

# Rockwell

## Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
<b>With Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
7,120	1,340	8,460 (65%)
<b>Without Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
3,200	1,300	4,500 (35%)
<b>Inventory Unit Total</b>		
10,320	2,640	12,960
<b>Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
Rockwell WSA (UT-050-186)		9,150

About 8,460 acres of the four Rockwell inventory units have wilderness characteristics. However, portions of Units 1, 3, and 4 (4,500 acres) are being used extensively for off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation use and lack wilderness characteristics. Numerous OHV and motorcycle routes wind their way between the junipers and sandy hummocks, although in the active dunes of Unit 3 on the east side of the area, trails are ephemeral and disappear when the wind blows. Unit 2 appears natural. As an extension of and in association with the contiguous Rockwell Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the units provide outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wildlife habitat for many different mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians (including endangered and sensitive species), supplements the wilderness characteristics of the area. A unique form of fourwing saltbush also grows here.

ROCKWELL—A panoramic view of the south end of the inventory units.



BLM photo

## Unit Description

The Rockwell inventory units are located in the center of Juab County about 26 miles west of the community of Nephi. The units are bounded on the west by a road, and on the north, east, and south by areas used extensively by OHVs for year-round recreation. The units are a small portion of a 124 square-mile system of giant, free-moving sand dunes consisting primarily of Quaternary lake bed sediments and unconsolidated silicious sands. Piñon-juniper woodlands in the rolling hills, and sagebrush, various grasses, and annuals cover a little more than half of the area. The eastern portion is an active dune system that is devoid of vegetation. The topography varies little more than a few hundred feet throughout the units. Uses include OHV play, camping, photography, and scientific studies of the area's plants and animals.

## Wilderness Characteristics

### Naturalness

Much of the Rockwell inventory units west and south of the existing WSA retain their natural character. Portions of Units 1, 3, and 4, and all of Unit 2, appear natural. However, much of Units 1, 3, and 4 are no longer natural because of OHV trails, campsites, and roads. A large portion of the active dune system within Unit 3,

however, remains natural and reasonably unaffected by OHV travel.

## Outstanding Opportunities

### Solitude

The inventory units have outstanding opportunities for solitude when considered in conjunction with the contiguous WSA. However, opportunities for solitude within portions of all units are negatively affected by the sights and sounds of intense OHV use.

### Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, camping, sightseeing, photography, and other forms of primitive or unconfined recreation are outstanding within the contiguous Rockwell WSA. In conjunction with the WSA, the inventory units also provide such opportunities.

## Supplemental Values

The Rockwell inventory units provide habitat for 48 species of mammals, 115 species of birds, the desert whipsnake, 14 species of reptiles, and one amphibian species. The bald eagle, an endangered species, and golden eagle, a sensitive species, are both within the area. Additionally, five Category 2 candidate species may occur. The last remaining habitat for an endemic species of fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens* var. *gigantea*) is in the area. This unique form of fourwing saltbush attains heights of up to 12 feet.

Most of the units are located within BLM's Little Sahara National Recreation Area. Contiguous to the units is the 9,150-acre Rockwell Outstanding Natural Area/Area of Critical Environmental Concern, established to protect endemic plants and scenic values within the unique sand dune ecosystem.

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