

Pilot Range

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
34,400	3,100	37,500 (73%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
11,100	2,600	13,700 (27%)
Inventory Unit Total		
45,500	5,700	51,200
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 37,500 acres of the Pilot Range inventory unit have wilderness characteristics. Much of the unit is natural and most of the human intrusions are substantially unnoticeable. About 13,700 acres lack wilderness characteristics because of substantially noticeable impacts from communication facilities and mining. The inventory unit's size and diverse topography provide visitors with outstanding opportunities to find solitude, and a variety of recreation opportunities exist within the rugged and natural setting. Several vehicle routes have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Unit Description

The Pilot Range inventory unit is located in western Box Elder County about 30 air miles north of Wendover. The Pilot Range runs north to south and varies in elevation from about 5,000 feet at its base to 8,000 feet on the mountain summits. Canyons generally run east or west. East of the Pilot Range is a large alkali flat, while the west side features a broad valley that extends into Nevada. Views from the range are spectacular. Several springs exist, but the occurrence of streams or free-flowing water is limited because of water developments and uses. Bettridge Creek in the south, the largest stream in the area, supports the threatened Lahotan cutthroat trout.

Vegetation at higher elevations and on north-facing slopes is dominated by piñon and juniper forests, mountain mahogany, and mixed mountain brush communities. South-facing slopes and ridge tops are dominated by sagebrush, grass, and mixed mountain brush communities. Rabbitbrush,

PILOT RANGE—The Patterson Pass vehicle route has been cherry-stemmed from the inventory unit, separating this rugged and spectacular mountain range into two adjoining parcels.

grass, and greasewood are common in drainage bottoms and at lower elevations. Bettridge Creek contains excellent riparian vegetation, but extensive water development in other areas limits the presence of additional riparian habitat.

Mining and cattle grazing are the dominant uses, with hunting being a seasonal use. Three communication sites are located at the north end of the range.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The Pilot Range inventory unit is crossed east to west by two vehicle routes: the Copper Mountain Road and the Patterson Pass vehicle way. Although the area north of the Copper Mountain Road is unnatural, the remainder of the inventory unit is essentially natural even though it is dissected into two sections by the Patterson Pass vehicle way.

North of the Copper Mountain Road, the unit contains several roads and radio/microwave towers. These features are visible from numerous locations within the northern portion of the unit, as well as from the outside. The telecommunication features are substantially noticeable and significantly detract from the unit's naturalness. In addition, significant mining activity has occurred, especially in the vicinity of the Copper Mountain Road.

Most of the inventory unit south of Copper Mountain Road is natural, with evidence of human development being substantially unnoticeable. Even though this portion contains several developments, the individual and cumulative impact on the natural character is minor. Most developments are related to mining and

livestock grazing. Overall, this portion of the unit is rugged, with steep slopes and deep canyons. The dramatic topography and varied vegetation hide any developments, making them unnoticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The inventory unit's size and rugged terrain ensure outstanding opportunities for solitude. Many vehicle ways are so seldom used that they are close to returning to a natural condition. Ridges and valley bottoms, as well as numerous side canyons, provide outstanding opportunities to be alone and apart from other people and the outside world. In addition, the diverse vegetation complements the topography by providing screening from human activity.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory unit's rugged terrain and size ensure the availability of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities for camping, hiking, and photography are outstanding. Opportunities for horseback riding or pack trips are abundant, given the unit's size and the presence of side canyons with outstanding beauty.

Supplemental Values

The inventory unit possesses exceptional scenery, both within itself and when looking into the adjacent valleys to the east and west. Elk and deer habitat exists, as well as habitat for the threatened Lahotan cutthroat trout. Mining and cattle grazing have left an interesting historical mark on the unit.



BLM photo

Pilot Range

