

Newfoundland Mountains

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
23,000	3,000	26,000 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
23,000	3,000	26,000
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

The entire Newfoundland Mountains inventory unit (26,000 acres) possesses wilderness characteristics. While the north end of the inventory unit has some impacts from past mining and livestock grazing developments, the area as a whole is natural. The unit is dissected by numerous canyons and is large enough that the human imprints do not dominate the landscape. The southern portion of the inventory unit includes some stock ponds, but they are near the boundary road and thus do not impact the natural quality of the unit. The unit provides outstanding opportunities both for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

Unit Description

The Newfoundland Mountains inventory unit is located in Box Elder County about 80 air miles northwest of Salt Lake City. The inventory unit is composed of both public and state lands. A parcel of private land is cherry-stemmed from the unit.

The Newfoundland Mountains are typical of the Basin and Range Province. The unit is a long (about 15 miles) and narrow (about 3 to 4 miles wide) island in the Great Salt Lake Desert mud flats. This north-south trending range is steep and rugged, rising from an elevation of about 4,200 feet at the base to over 7,000 feet at Desert Peak. High vertical cliffs and green-white quartz monzonite outcrops create dramatic scenery in the northern end of the unit. Vegetation is somewhat sparse, although it is denser at the northern end than the south, and includes juniper along with associated shrubs and grasses. Common shrubs include sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and annual and perennial grasses.

NEWFOUNDLAND MOUNTAINS— Solitude and isolation can be found almost anywhere in this “island” mountain range totally surrounded by the Great Salt Lake Desert mud flats.

The inventory unit has been used principally for mining and livestock grazing. One peak is used by the military for a communication tracking site. Other uses include hunting and hiking.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

While the north end of the Newfoundland Mountains inventory unit has been impacted by past mineral development and livestock management facilities, the area as a whole retains its natural appearance. A few livestock water developments are present in the central and southern portions of the unit, as well as along the boundary road. The steep, rugged, and highly dissected nature of the landform localizes the impacts of these developments to the immediate environment surrounding them.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

Several factors combine to provide outstanding opportunities for a visitor to find solitude. While the mountain range may appear narrow on the map, it is of sufficient width (3 - 4 miles) and length (about 15 miles) to create a large expanse of wild lands, providing plenty of land area in which to find solitude from the outside world and other visitors. Opportunities to get away from the sights and sounds of civilization are also afforded by the many canyons. From atop the peaks and main ridgeline, a visitor can see the Cedar Mountains and the Pilot Mountains, a distance of about 30 to 40 miles in either direction. This vastness creates a feeling of isolation. The Newfoundland Mountains, which are an island in the Great Salt Lake Desert mud

flats, appear to be only lightly visited. Past mining has stopped, livestock use is seasonal, and recreation use, while growing, is still light. Access to the area is not impossible, but it does take some effort, making the unit a good place to get away from people. All of these factors combine to create a truly outstanding opportunity for solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

While the unit does not provide any one single outstanding primitive recreational activity, the combination of activities that are available are outstanding. These activities include day hiking, backpacking, horseback riding and packing, sightseeing, historical study, environmental study, photography, rockhounding, and hunting. The unit is large enough to provide for extended lengths of stay, and the isolated and natural setting further enhances these opportunities.

Supplemental Values

Steep, rugged, and near-vertical cliffs and quartz monzonite rock outcrops provide outstanding scenery, and long-distance views offer scenic vistas beyond the mountains. Historically, the unit has been explored for gold, silver, copper, and lead, and the Desert Flower Mine was a producing tungsten mine until the mid-1950s. From Desert Peak the visitor can envision the route of the Donner-Reed Trail stretching all the way from the Cedar Mountains to Donner Spring at the base of the Pilot Mountains. Ecologically, the Newfoundland Mountains are also quite interesting and somewhat unique. Numerous birds of prey and eyries are present in the cliff formations of the unit. The mountain range is a desert island surrounded by the Great Salt Lake Desert mud flats and is considered one of the most isolated tracts of public lands in northwestern Utah.



BLM photo

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