

The Cockscomb

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
500	900	1,400 (56%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
1,100	0	1,100 (44%)
Inventory Unit Total		
1,600	900	2,500
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
The Cockscomb WSA (UT-040-275)		10,080

Portions of Units 1 and 3 (1,400 acres) of The Cockscomb inventory units have wilderness characteristics. These areas contain extensions of the landforms and wilderness opportunities present in the contiguous The Cockscomb Wilderness Study Area (WSA). However, all of Unit 2 and small portions of Units 1 and 3 (1,100 acres) lack wilderness characteristics primarily because of a network of power lines and associated access routes.

The portions of Unit 1 and 3 with wilderness characteristics are roadless and natural. Unit 1 is a sagebrush flatland with small stair-step mesas that rise to join the geologic feature known as the Cockscomb, while Unit 3 contains a portion of the Cockscomb itself and a 1.5-mile reach of the Paria River. Both units provide opportunities for geological sightseeing, photography, and short day hikes into this area of particularly striking scenery and interesting geology. The Cockscomb, a prominent feature, is a craggy ridge of sandstone that is inaccessible except to foot traffic.

Unit Description

The Cockscomb inventory units are located in Kane County about 45 miles east of Kanab. All public lands in the area are within the BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Three individual tracts constitute the area under inventory, each of them contiguous to BLM's The Cockscomb WSA.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of Units 1 and 3 appear natural, although they have some evidence of human activity. The interior of Unit 1 contains one 0.3-mile vehicle way and a fence, both substantially unnoticeable. Along the highway, Unit 1 contains power lines, an associated maintenance route, two stock ponds, and a fence line, rendering a small area unnatural. Unit 3 is natural except for two power lines, their associated maintenance routes, and two faint vehicle ways (totaling 0.5 mile). The power line facilities render a small part of Unit 3 unnatural. All of Unit 2 is unnatural. It contains a route to private property, 0.7 mile of vehicle way, evidence of past mining, fences, a power line along Utah Highway 89, and old bulldozer blading scars. In addition, Unit 2 is separated from the WSA by a major power line and its associated maintenance route.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist in the canyons and on the mesas

within the roadless and natural portions of Units 1 and 3. Portions of the units are natural extensions of the canyons, dips, and swells contained within The Cockscomb WSA; all provide superb topographic screening.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The natural portions of Units 1 and 3 are natural extensions of the landforms within The Cockscomb WSA, and thus provide similar outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Visitors can explore the Paria River by foot or horseback. The Cockscomb is a stunning backdrop and formidable obstacle. It is a challenge to ascend to the top of the comb, but it can be achieved by rock scrambling or following a side canyon up to the summit. The view from the top is outstanding. Sightseeing, cultural site investigation, photography, nature study, day hiking, outdoor art work, bird watching, and other pursuits are possible, especially along the river and in at least two side canyons.

Supplemental Values

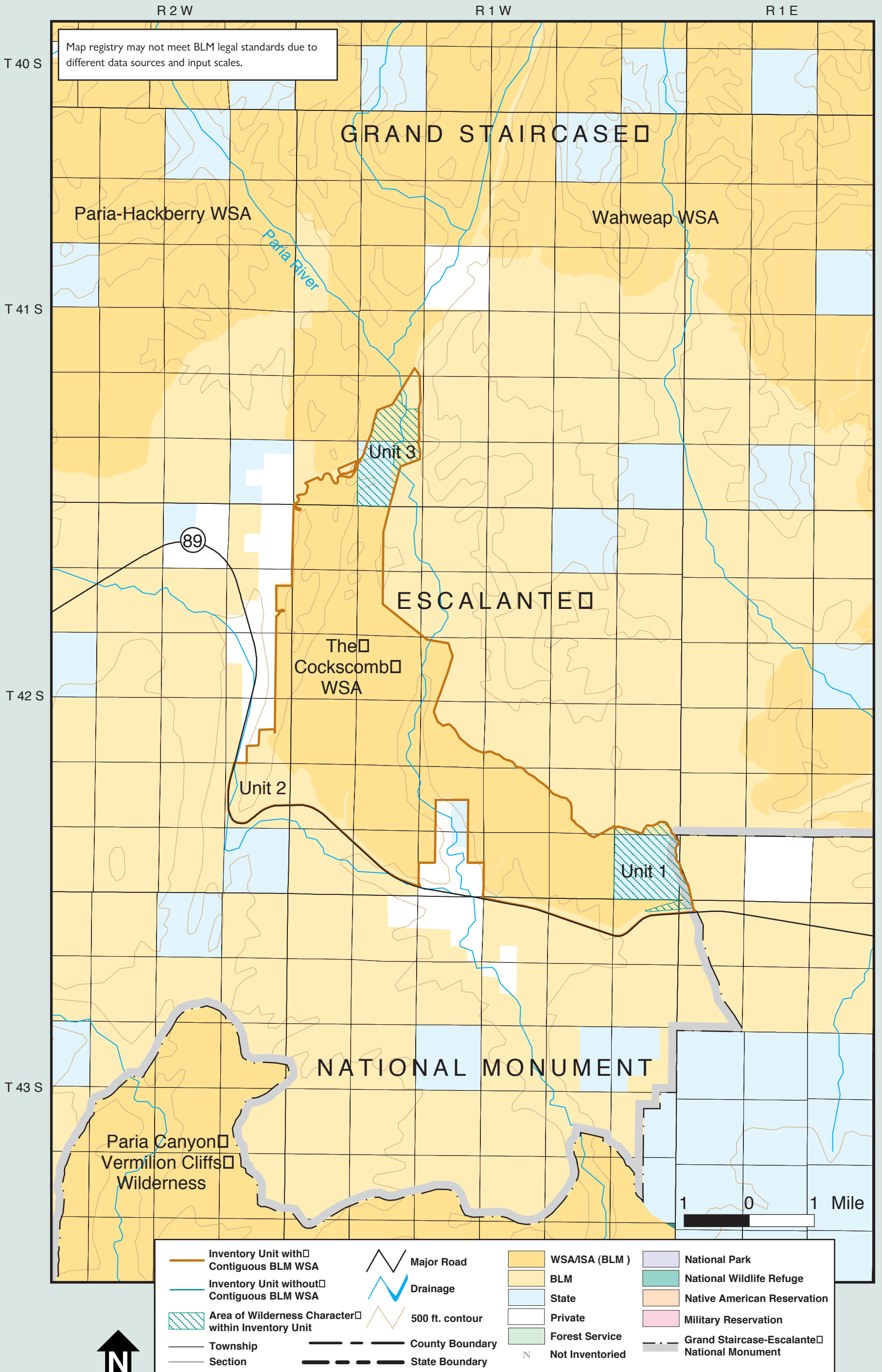
The Cockscomb—a spectacular, jagged sandstone ridge—traverses the area for several miles in a north-south direction. This red, tan, and yellow feature is impressive geologically, as well as scenically. It is of interest both to motorists traveling Utah Highway 89 and to backcountry enthusiasts, who scramble several hundred feet to the top to venture along the ridge line. Scattered piñon and juniper tenaciously find places to grow on the comb among the formations created by wind and water erosion.

THE COCKSCOMB—The Cockscomb (background—one-half mile distant) dominates the east side of Unit 3.



BLM photo

The Cockscomb



SOUTH CENTRAL REGION—The Cockscomb