

Squaw Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
12,800	1,900	14,700 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
12,800	1,900	14,700
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

The entire 14,700-acre Squaw Canyon inventory unit has wilderness characteristics. The mesa, cliffs, and inner canyons of the unit provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The smoky-grey shale of lower badlands formations provides a dramatic scenic contrast to tall carved faces of tan sandstone pillars, buttes, and cliffs.

Several locations within the unit contain minor evidence of human activity, mainly livestock fences and vehicle ways, but these are substantially unnoticeable. Eight roads and vehicle ways have been cherry-stemmed from the unit or excluded by boundary modification. Most of these routes go to scenic overlooks of Squaw Canyon. Four of the excluded roads/ways are located along the northeast boundary.

Unit Description

The Squaw Canyon inventory unit is located near the eastern boundary of Kane County about 60 miles east of Kanab and 30 miles northwest of Page, Arizona. The unit follows the southern portion of the Kaiparowits Plateau and is within BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The unit contains three distinct geographic areas: the flat mesa-plateau tops associated with Smoky Mountain; rocky sandstone rims, benches, and deep canyons radiating from Squaw Canyon; and lower-elevation badlands, rolling hills, and washes. The unit's namesake, Squaw Canyon, is a large canyon in the center of the unit.

Sparse high desert shrubs such as blackbrush and ephedra cover the badlands and lower portions of the cliff formations. A scattered piñon and juniper woodland is predominant in the higher elevations, drainages, and mesa tops. Little human use is apparent in the unit, although evidence of mineral exploration and recreation can be found, especially in the northern region.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The Squaw Canyon inventory unit has natural character. Several locations within the unit contain minor evidence of recreational and mining activity and livestock grazing (livestock fences), but these features are substantially unnoticeable. Impacts associated with mineral exploration consist of two faint nonmaintained vehicular ways. One vehicle way is visible from the rim overlooking Kelly Grade, but this vehicle way is no longer accessible to vehicle traffic and is being reclaimed naturally. The second vehicle way is visible at ground level only by identifying the shoulder berms. Although originally constructed, these vehicle ways are largely unnoticeable on the ground and are gradually disappearing because of non-use, lack of maintenance, and natural erosional processes.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. There are many secluded areas in this diverse array of canyons and washes. Numerous high-walled side canyons radiating from Squaw Canyon provide screening and separation for visitors. The sense of isolation is reinforced by the difficult trek required to reach many of these tributary canyons. Visitors have to meander cross-country some distance by foot or horseback to reach Squaw Canyon's diverse drainage system. This factor limits the possibility of visitor-to-

visitor encounters in the central portion of the unit. The unit's size and blocked shape (averaging six miles by five miles) also contribute to solitude opportunities. Satisfactory screening is provided by the scattered piñon and juniper woodlands on the upper mesas and plateaus, ensuring solitude for visitors in these locales.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding. Eroding vehicle ways and washes provide a natural trail system leading to many of the side canyons. Hikers can spend a great deal of time venturing through Squaw Canyon and its numerous tributary canyons. The colorful shale and erosional clay soils of the badlands provide outstanding photographic opportunities. Scenic vistas along the rim above Squaw Canyon provide a miniature "Grand Canyon" impression on visitors. The variety of canyon, plateau, and mesa landforms is outstanding; the area's rugged sandstone cliffs, deep canyons, and miles of canyon rims and plateaus provide fine sightseeing opportunities.

Supplemental Values

Sweeping and picturesque scenic views to the south, east, and west can be enjoyed from the canyon rims above Squaw Canyon, including vistas of Lake Powell, Navajo Mountain, and a miniature "Grand Canyon" view to the west toward Smoky Hollow and Tibbet Bench. Interior vistas are also superb. The area's rugged sandstone cliffs and deep canyons, coupled with its convoluted canyon rims and plateaus, provide spacious views of natural rocky canyons. In lower elevations, giant cliff faces stand above a sea of gray shale badlands.

SQUAW CANYON—The smoky-grey shale of lower badlands formations provides a dramatic scenic contrast to the tall, carved faces of sandstone pillars, buttes, and cliffs.



Jerry Sintz

Squaw Canyon

