

# Burning Hills

## Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
<b>With Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
8,690	3,980	12,670 (100%)
<b>Without Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
0	0	0 (0%)
<b>Inventory Unit Total</b>		
8,690	3,980	12,670
<b>Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
Burning Hills WSA (UT-040-079)		61,550

The thirteen Burning Hills inventory units surround the Burning Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA) located on the Kaiparowits Plateau. All of the inventory units (12,670 acres) have wilderness characteristics, are roadless and natural, and are contiguous to the larger Burning Hills WSA. The outstanding opportunities for solitude found within the WSA extend to the units. Many of the units also have supplemental features, including natural coal fires with their associated colorations, deep rocky canyons, scenic geologic formations, and scenic overlooks.

The boundaries of the inventory units have been drawn to eliminate graded roads, mineral exploration impacts, coal fire rehabilitation impacts, and vehicle routes receiving regular and continuous use.

## Unit Description

The Burning Hills inventory units are located in southeastern Kane County about 30 miles south of Escalante. They are entirely within BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

The terrain is characterized by undulating benchlands with scenic overlooks into steep and rugged drainages and canyons. The high-elevation benchlands are covered with dense piñon and juniper forests, while the lower elevations contain desert shrubs, grasslands, and some riparian vegetation in the creeks and canyons.

## Wilderness Characteristics

### Naturalness

The Burning Hills inventory units retain their natural character. Units 5 and 6 appear completely natural and untouched by human activity. Eight of the inventory units appear natural but contain some substantially unnoticeable evidence of past human activity, including 25 vehicle ways totaling 23.5 miles and eight drill pads. Most of the vehicle ways are from mineral exploration, seismic lines, and recreational access to woodcutting sites. Extensive ground-truthing revealed that most of these have been abandoned, are revegetating, and are substantially unnoticeable. The single-pass bulldozer routes found on Window Sash Bench, Burning Hills, Smoky Mountain, and elsewhere are rapidly being reclaimed because of non-use and natural erosion processes.

Boundaries of seven inventory units have been drawn to eliminate substantially noticeable disturbances, including graded roads, mineral exploration impacts, coal fire rehabilitation impacts, and vehicle routes receiving regular and continuous use. The road on Window Sash Bench (Unit 2), the road spurs in the Burning Hills (Unit 4), the scenic overlook road and coal fire access road (Units 7 and 8), the Shute Bench and Needle Eye Water roads (Unit 9), and the roads on Dry Bench (Unit 11) and at Petes Cove (Unit 12) have been cherry-stemmed from the inventory units.

## Outstanding Opportunities

### Solitude

The inventory units are contiguous to the Burning Hills WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for solitude. They increase the size and improve the configuration of this WSA, as well as having a combination of topographic and vegetative screening that greatly enhances prevailing opportunities for solitude within the WSA. The inventory units containing lands located on Window Sash Bench (Units 1, 2), on the Burning Hills (Units 3, 4, 5, 6), on

Smoky Mountain bench (Units 7, 8, 9), in Whities and Needle Eye Canyons (Unit 9), along Last Chance Creek (Unit 10), in Dry Wash (Unit 11), and at Petes Cove (Units 12, 13) possess the same outstanding opportunities for solitude as the adjacent landscapes within the neighboring WSA.

The piñon/juniper forests on the benches provide sufficient vegetative screening to separate users and create a feeling of seclusion. The topographic relief found in the canyons and deep drainages, along with the area's remoteness and natural quietness, further intensify the feeling of isolation from humans and their activities.

## Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory units are contiguous to the Burning Hills WSA, which has no identified outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, and horseback riding can be found in nearly all of the units.

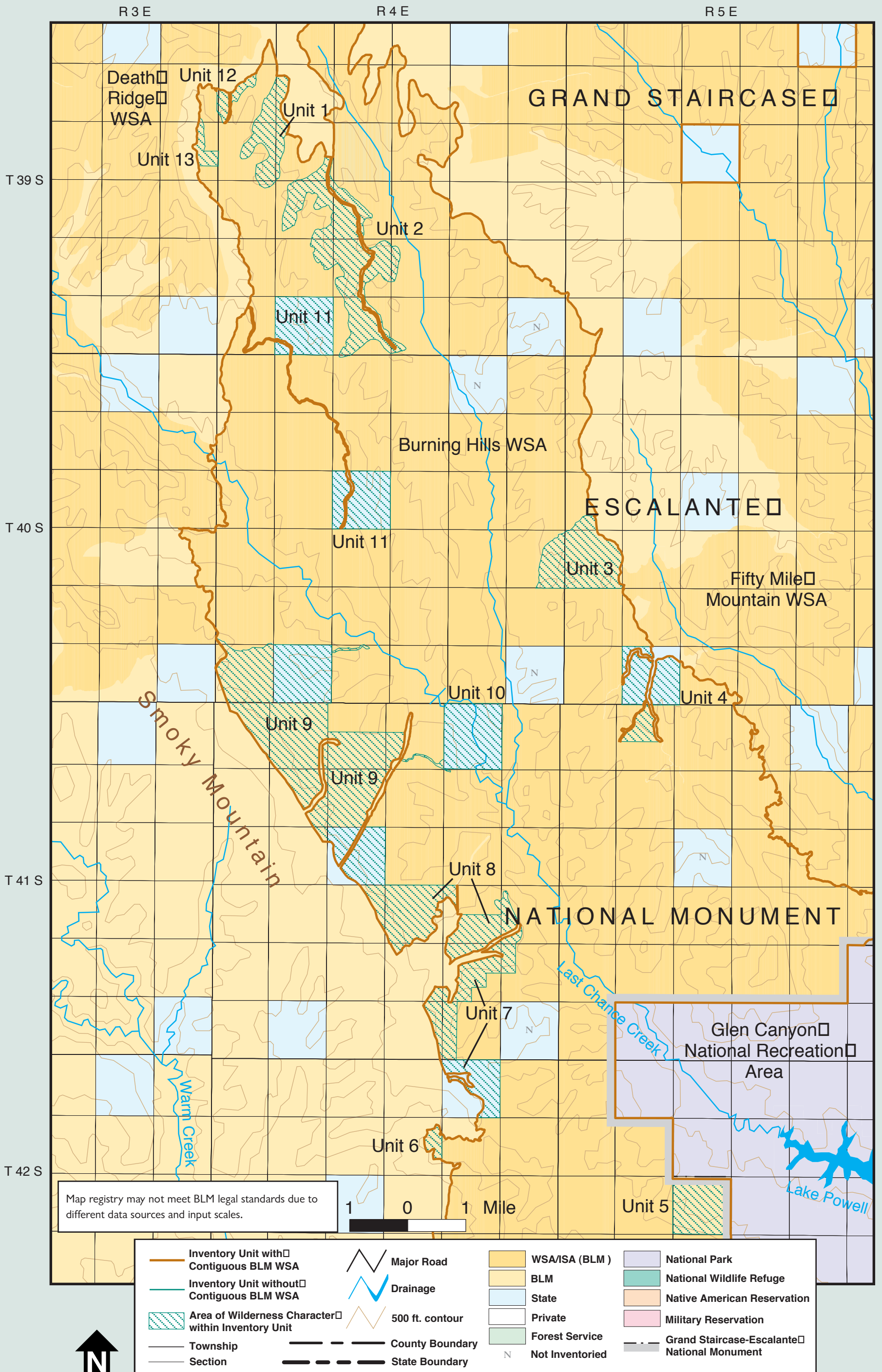
Hiking and ecological study opportunities are good in the expansive piñon/juniper forests found on Window Sash Bench (Units 1, 2, 3), in the canyons of Whities Canyon (Unit 9) and Last Chance Creek (Unit 10), and in the drainage of Dry Wash (Unit 11). In addition, opportunities for sightseeing and photography can be found in seven inventory units (2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12).

## Supplemental Values

Nearly all of the inventory units possess at least one or more ecological, geological, scientific or scenic values. There are opportunities for ecological study of piñon/juniper forests and their associated wildlife on Window Sash Bench (Units 1, 2, 3).

The units with special geologic and scientific study opportunities include those with the visually striking red colorations caused by naturally occurring coal fires and associated with the deep rocky canyons (Units 5, 7, 8, 10, 11). Several of the units contain particularly scenic geologic formations or overlooks with scenic views (Units 4, 6, 9, 10, 11).

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SOUTH CENTRAL REGION—Burning Hills