

Hurricane Wash

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
8,000	1,100	9,100 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
8,000	1,100	9,100
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Escalante Canyons (Tract 5) ISA		760
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area		

All 9,100 acres of the Hurricane Wash inventory unit have wilderness characteristics. Seven routes and associated line cabins, along with corrals, a pipeline, reservoirs, and trailheads, have been cherry-stemmed from the unit. The unit contains three miles of Hurricane Wash and offers opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude comparable to the contiguous Escalante Canyons (Tract 5) Instant Study Area (ISA) and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA). Outstanding primitive recreation opportunities are experienced by hiking Hurricane Wash, or by taking the Jacob Hamblin Arch trail into the renowned Coyote Gulch, the Dry Fork of Coyote Gulch, and the Escalante River. The unit has natural character but is not pristine, given an assortment of old seismic lines, fence lines, an abandoned airstrip, and some vehicle ways. However, these imprints are inconsequential, having little influence on the area's naturalness or associated wilderness qualities.

Unit Description

The unit is located in Kane County about 37 miles southeast of Escalante. All public lands are within BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. It is composed of two distinct geographic areas: Hurricane Wash itself and the gently sloping desert benchlands north and south of the drainage. Hurricane Wash crosses the unit's center west to east, cutting through two sandstone formations. The wash enters the unit just east of the Hole-in-the-Rock Road. The further east one travels, the more scenic and incised Hurricane Wash becomes. The wash crosses the unit for about three miles before it enters the Glen Canyon NRA. The benchlands are open and offer a sand dune type of environment, with low shrubs and expansive views. The benchlands slope moderately downward toward Hurricane Wash. The monotonous rise of the northern bench is interrupted only by the abrupt appearance

of the 150-foot Chimney Rock, an isolated sandstone spire. The benchlands are covered with low-growing desert shrubs and grasses. The area is currently used for day hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, geological study, sightseeing, and four-wheel drive vehicle travel.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The units retain their natural character, even though old human imprints are scattered throughout. Most imprints consist of one-time seismic line passes, fence lines, and vehicle ways. There are ten seismic lines, three fence lines, one abandoned fence line, and eight vehicle ways. An abandoned jeep trail once extended down Hurricane Wash, and an overgrown and abandoned airstrip is next to the Hole-in-the-Rock Road. Some seismic lines stretch for 10 miles from the base of Fiftymile Mountain through the unit to the NRA boundary. These look highly intrusive and easily driven when viewed from aircraft and inventoried by photo interpretation. However, ground investigation reveals a different perspective: these one-time/one-pass surface scrapes are generally unnoticeable and are being naturally reclaimed with desert shrubs and grasses. The vehicle ways are little used and have little impact on the area's natural character, although they are occasionally used by recreationists and livestock managers. Seven roads and adjacent facilities have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit is an extension of the Glen Canyon NRA and the Escalante Canyon

(Tract 5) ISA, which have outstanding solitude opportunities. The solitude opportunities in the unit are outstanding when associated with the Coyote Gulch and Escalante River Canyon complex to the east and north, although solitude opportunities in Hurricane Wash itself are limited because of the sheer amount of visitation. Hikers frequently encounter other parties in the narrow confines of the canyon.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The unit adjoins and is an extension of wild lands within the Glen Canyon NRA and the Escalante Canyons (Tract 5) ISA, lands that possess outstanding primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. The primitive recreation opportunities in Hurricane Wash are outstanding when associated with the Escalante River Canyon country of the ISA and the NRA directly east and north. Portions of the unit provide the same outstanding opportunities for backpacking, day hiking, camping, sightseeing, and photography that exist in the bordering lands. The area is heavily used year-round by backpackers and hikers. In fact, the recreational opportunities available in this unit have been widely publicized in guidebooks, brochures, books, magazines, and Internet sites having regional and national circulation.

Supplemental Values

Hurricane Wash and Chimney Rock are the two chief geological features in the unit. Hurricane Wash carves through two sandstone formations: the Entrada and the Navajo. Chimney Rock is a red-hued sandstone monolith about 150 feet high. Highly scenic in its isolation, this lonely spire towers above a level shrub-covered bench.

HURRICANE WASH—A view of Chimney Rock, three miles distant, as seen from Fortymile Ridge.



BLM photo

Hurricane Wash

