

Phipps-Death Hollow

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
1,650	3,040	4,690 (98%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
80	0	80 (2%)
Inventory Unit Total		
1,730	3,040	4,770
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Phipps-Death Hollow ISA		42,731

Five of the six Phipps-Death Hollow inventory units (4,690 acres) possess remarkable wilderness characteristics akin to those in the contiguous Phipps-Death Hollow Instant Study Area (ISA). These units provide an extension of the wilderness opportunities found in the larger ISA and the Forest Service's nearby Box-Death Hollow Wilderness. The five natural units provide visitors with outstanding opportunities for camping, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, and sightseeing. They enhance the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation found within the contiguous ISA and nearby wilderness. Unit 4 (80 acres) is unnatural and lacks wilderness characteristics.

Unit Description

The Phipps-Death Hollow inventory units are in eastern Garfield County, ranging from one to eight miles northeast of Escalante. Units 1, 2, 3 and 6 are composed entirely of state land. Unit 5 is partially state land, while Unit 4 is entirely public land. All public lands are part of BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

The six units have steep-walled canyons, mesas, benches, canyon rims, natural bridges, arches, and four perennial streams, all similar to and linked with the acclaimed wild landscapes displayed in the contiguous ISA. The canyons slicing through Units 1, 3, and 5 are among the deepest in the Escalante River's drainage system. Unit 3 contains the most scenic part of Calf Creek and more than one mile of the famous hiking trail to Lower Calf Creek Falls. This trail is used by thousands of visitors annually. A scenic sandstone portion of the Escalante River

canyon's rugged north wall rises in Unit 5, and a segment of the Escalante River flows through this unit as well. Forested and deeply incised Pine Creek flows through Unit 6. The deep sandstone canyons and adjacent benches of Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 present spectacular landscape contrasts.

The units are currently used by a variety of commercial and noncommercial recreationists, by educational institutions, by organizations for scientific study, and by ranchers with grazing permits.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 were found to be natural, with evidence of human activity being substantially unnoticeable. However, Unit 4 was found to be unnatural; it is separated from the rest of the ISA by a telephone line and associated rights-of-way. Inventory Unit 1 is pristine. Unit 2 is traversed by the cherry-stemmed McGath Bench Road but is otherwise pristine. The popular Calf Creek hiking trail crosses Unit 3, but the unit remains natural. Two vehicle ways, one road, and grazing developments have been cherry-stemmed from Unit 5. The three vehicle ways that remain have not been maintained and are revegetating. The boundary of Unit 6 has been drawn to exclude disturbances west of Pine Creek.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The precipitous canyons, woodland-covered mesas and benches, and canyon rims extending from the Phipps-Death Hollow ISA into each of the units are natural

extensions, and enhance the solitude opportunities, of both the ISA and the nearby Box-Death Hollow Wilderness. The inventory units contain the same combination of topographic screening and plant cover that provide outstanding solitude opportunities within the ISA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 all adjoin and are natural ecological extensions of the landforms within the Phipps-Death Hollow ISA. The ISA exhibits an uncommon collection of documented outstanding primitive recreation opportunities. Each of these five units provides the visitor with comparable camping, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, and sightseeing for cultural and geological features.

Moreover, these units further enhance the primitive recreation opportunities already present in the ISA.

Supplemental Values

Scenic quality is outstanding in all areas, with special features including Death Hollow Canyon, McGath Bench, Calf Creek Canyon, the Escalante River, and the Antone Uplift. Red-and-white sandstone spires, knobs, deep canyons, and buttes contrast with the green vegetation and blue sky. The benches provide outstanding views of the Escalante Canyons.

Archaeological sites are numerous in Units 1, 2, 3, and 5; Unit 3 has documented cliff dwellings, granaries, and petroglyphs. Unit 5 contains a segment of the Boynton Wagon route. This still-visible wagon route, which was constructed in 1909 as a shortcut between Escalante and Salt Gulch, may qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, as might the Friendship Cove Pictograph in Unit 3.

PHIPPS-DEATH HOLLOW—A view of Unit 3 overlooking Calf Creek and the Calf Creek Falls Trail.



BLM photo

Phipps-Death Hollow

