

# Studhorse Peaks

## Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
<b>With Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
20,200	2,100	22,300 (90%)
<b>Without Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
2,200	400	2,600 (10%)
<b>Inventory Unit Total</b>		
22,400	2,500	24,900
<b>Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
None		

The portion of the Studhorse Peaks inventory unit possessing wilderness characteristics (22,300 acres) appears natural and provides visitors with outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Expansive juniper and piñon woodlands are interspersed with peaks, buttes, mesas, washes, and canyons, presenting the primitive recreationist with a variety of landscapes and secluded locales. The Studhorse Peaks, a series of four prominent buttes, offer imposing 360-degree views of the entire Circle Cliffs region of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Several portions of the unit (2,600 acres) lack wilderness characteristics because of the cumulative effects of mineral exploration, stock ponds, an oil well pad, woodcutting disturbance, a gravel mixing pad, a bladed fence, seismic lines, and associated access routes. Five roads have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

## Unit Description

The Studhorse Peaks inventory unit is located in eastern Garfield County about 28 miles northeast of Escalante. The area is composed of several levels of mesas and east-to-west trending canyons and drainages. The vegetation is predominantly piñon-juniper woodlands on the uplands, with sagebrush and shrubs in the lower-elevation valleys on the west side.

Evidence of past mining is found on state land, on mesas in the south, and on portions of the Studhorse Peaks. A series of grazing developments are found in the northeast.

**STUDHORSE PEAKS**—The distant Circle Cliffs region of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument can be viewed from the top of any of the Studhorse Peaks. Dense piñon and juniper woodland atop the buttes serves to screen and isolate visitors from each other.

Some recreational use occurs mainly around the Studhorse Peaks, with woodcutting, car camping, hunting, and hiking being the main pursuits.

## Wilderness Characteristics

### Naturalness

The greatest part of the Studhorse Peaks inventory unit retains its natural character, with human impacts being substantially unnoticeable. Little surface-disturbing activity has occurred in this area, and what disturbance has occurred is rapidly being reclaimed by weathering and plant growth.

The three western most Studhorse Peaks have each been impacted by mineral exploration to varying degrees. Each peak's base is cut by exploration routes and bulldozer scrapes; exploration routes were cut to two of the three summits. Evidence of historic uranium drilling exploration, these intrusions are now largely reclaimed or continuing to be reclaimed through natural processes. The summit exploration routes are eroded, impassible, and overgrown with trees and bushes. All of these intrusions are screened by terrain and plants; they are unnoticeable to casual observers unless directly encountered. The remaining evidence of mechanical excavation will be eroded and overgrown over time.

Most identified vehicle ways are faint or one-time-only occurrences from woodcutting, recreation, or 30- to 40-year-old mineral exploration activities. However, parts of the unit's northeastern and southern segments were found to be unnatural and lacking in wilderness characteristics because of the cumulative effects of mining, ranching, and recreational activity.

## Outstanding Opportunities

### Solitude

The entire Studhorse Peaks inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, given its diverse terrain and vegetative screening. A dense piñon and juniper forest; White Canyon and other deep gorges; and rugged escarpments, mountains, mesas, washes, and uplands serve to screen or isolate visitors from each other. Pristine overlooks in the interior and on top of the Studhorse Peaks offer visitors a sense of seclusion.

### Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The entire inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities for general sightseeing and photography of the surrounding Circle Cliffs region are outstanding from the top of the Studhorse Peaks. Features such as balanced rock formations and archaeological remains can be discovered in this relatively unexplored area. There are day hiking and backpacking opportunities throughout the unit, including treks up pristine drainages like White Canyon and scrambles to viewpoints on the Studhorse Peaks and other mesas and buttes.

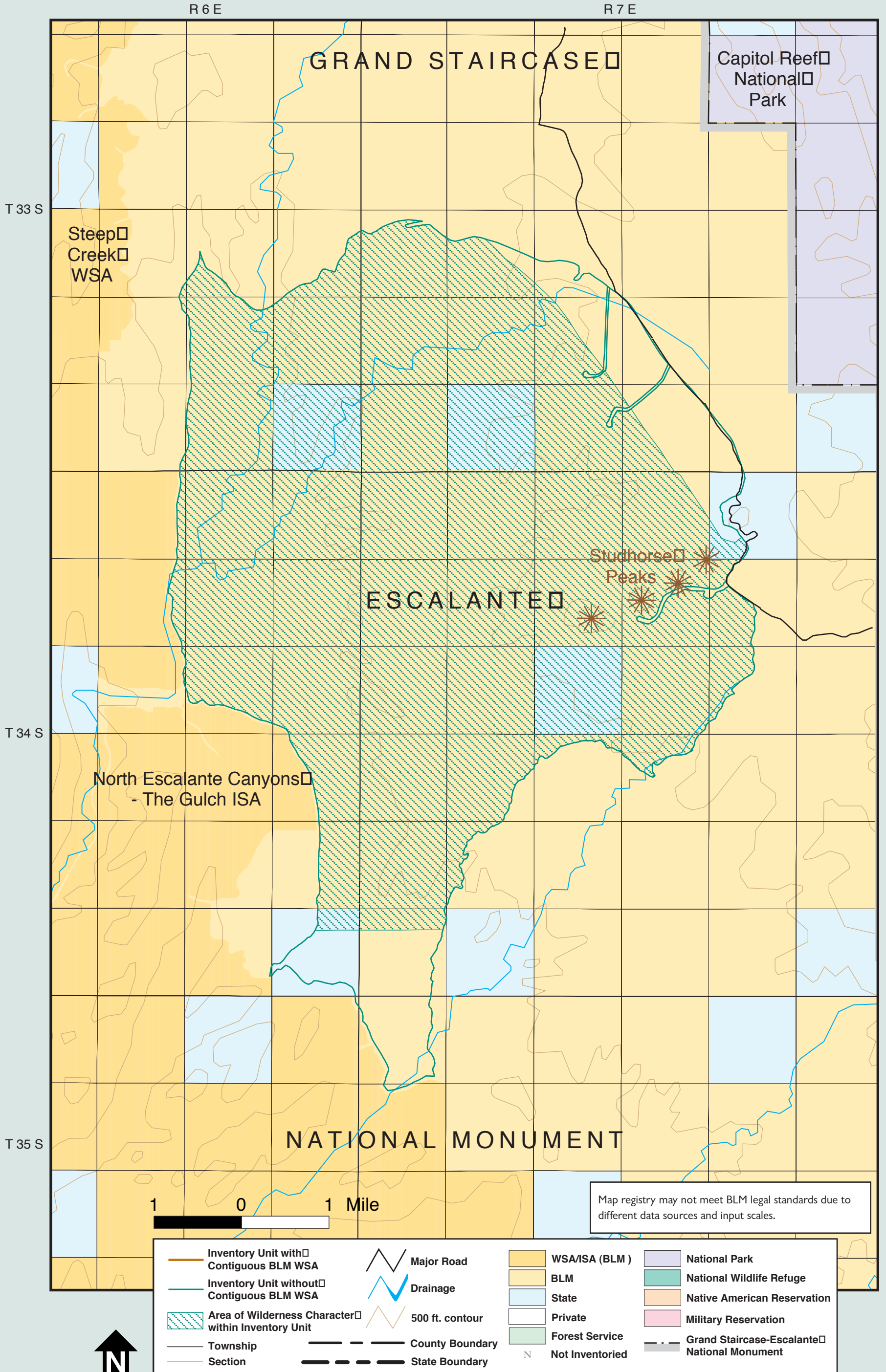
## Supplemental Values

A series of prominent mesas known as the Studhorse Peaks is a striking signature feature for the unit that offers exceptional views of the surrounding Circle Cliffs and Escalante River Canyons region. A short day hike to these peaks provides panoramic vistas of prominent red-rock cliffs, spires, mesas, canyons, and mountains. Vantage points from the summits provide unsurpassed views of this unique geologic region.



Jerry Sintz

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Map registry may not meet BLM legal standards due to different data sources and input scales.