

Squaw and Papoose Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
3,680	1,240	4,920 (99%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
70	0	70 (1%)
Inventory Unit Total		
3,750	1,240	4,990
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Squaw and Papoose Canyon WSA (UT-060-227)		6,676
(CO-030-265A)		4,611

Most of the four Squaw and Papoose Canyon inventory units (4,920 acres) have wilderness characteristics. Contiguous to the Squaw and Papoose Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the units are logical extensions of this WSA, enhancing its outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive forms of recreation. Recreation opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, camping, and cultural exploration. A few small portions of the units (70 acres) lack wilderness characteristics, primarily because of disturbance from past chainings.

Unit Description

The Squaw and Papoose Canyon inventory units are located in eastern San Juan County on the border of Colorado, approximately 25 miles east of Blanding. The units are all contiguous to the Utah portion of the Squaw and Papoose Canyon WSA. Unit 1 is also contiguous to the Colorado portion of the Squaw and Papoose Canyon WSA. Unit 1 encompasses Mares Tail Canyon and is bounded on the east by the Utah and Colorado state line and on the north and west by a gravel road and private property. Unit 2 includes much of the west side of the Squaw Canyon drainage and is likewise bounded by gravel roads and private property.

Unit 3 is almost entirely state land in Squaw Canyon just downstream from the confluence with Papoose Canyon. Unit 4

is on the Squaw Point mesa, bounded on the east and south by a bladed road.

Vegetation in Units 1 and 2 is predominantly piñon and juniper. Unit 3 has a mixture of sagebrush and saltbush, with tamarisk and impressive cottonwoods along the Squaw Canyon riparian zone. Unit 4 has been chained and is now mostly sagebrush. Elevation varies from 6,500 feet in Unit 1 to 5,200 feet in Unit 3.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The area surrounding Mares Tail Canyon, which makes up Unit 1, appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature and retains wilderness characteristics throughout. One exception is a 1.25-mile cherry-stemmed road to a plugged and abandoned well pad. The west side of Squaw Canyon in Unit 2 appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the exception of a small borrow pit area in the north. An old chaining has substantially recovered, with excellent natural regeneration of junipers.

In Unit 3, old mineral prospects are largely unnoticeable, so this entire unit in the middle of Squaw Canyon retains its wilderness characteristics. The boundary of the southeastern corner of this unit is almost invisible, but a more practical boundary could not be found. Unit 4 was impacted by the chaining of Squaw Point in the mid-1960s, and the eastern portion of the chained area remains unnatural in appearance. However, the western portion has been reclaimed naturally and appears once again to be affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The units are contiguous to the Squaw and Papoose Canyon WSA, which provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. Unit 1 provides excellent opportunities for solitude in Mares Tail Canyon. Only when considered in conjunction with the contiguous WSA are the opportunities for solitude outstanding within all four units.

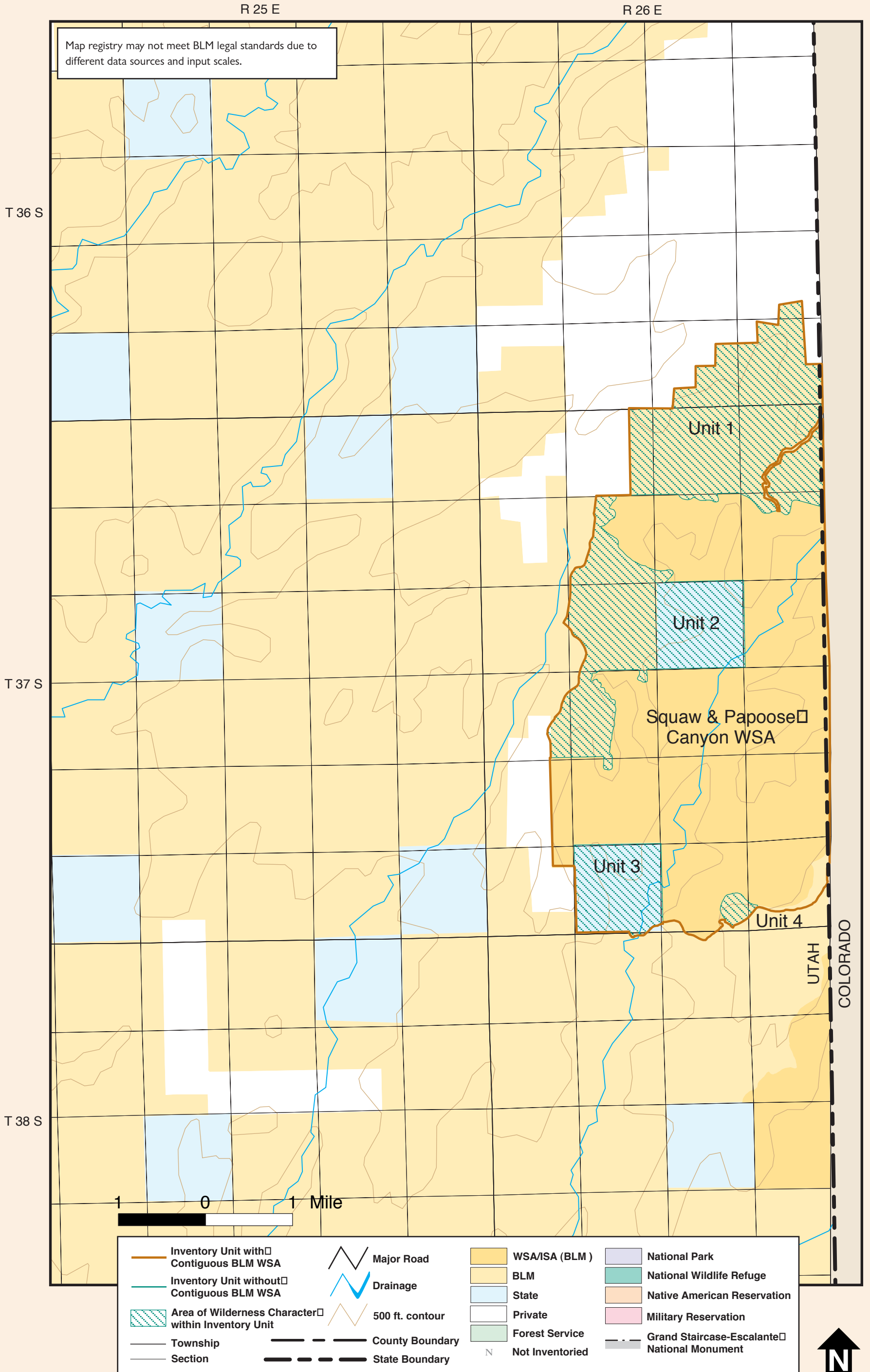
Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The units are contiguous with the Squaw and Papoose Canyon WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are excellent opportunities for primitive forms of recreation—particularly hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding—in Units 1 and 3. Only in conjunction with the contiguous WSA are opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation outstanding within all four units.

Supplemental Values

Squaw and Papoose Canyon, like neighboring Cross Canyon, is an important ecological island in a surrounding sea of lands altered by agriculture. There is a permanent water source in Squaw Creek, which is an enhancement in this predominantly arid region. Although no extensive cultural inventory has been completed, it is probable that many archaeological sites exist.

Squaw and Papoose Canyon



SOUTHEAST REGION—Squaw and Papoose Canyon