

Cross Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
1,400	400	1,800 (69%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
700	90	790 (31%)
Inventory Unit Total		
2,100	490	2,590
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Cross Canyon WSA (UT-060-229/CO-030-265)		12,588

The Cross Canyon inventory unit is contiguous with the Cross Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), which is situated in both Utah and Colorado (12,588 acres). Most of the Cross Canyon inventory unit (1,800 acres) has wilderness characteristics. The unit is a logical extension of the WSA, enhancing its outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation—particularly hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, photography, and cultural exploration—along the perennial waters of Cross Canyon. However, part of the unit (790 acres) lacks wilderness characteristics because of previous road construction and a chaining.

Unit Description

The Cross Canyon inventory unit is located in eastern San Juan County, Utah, on the border of Colorado, approximately 30 miles southeast of Blanding. It is contiguous to the Utah and Colorado Cross Canyon WSA.

The Cross Canyon inventory unit encompasses the eastern half of Squaw Point and part of the western half of the Cross Canyon drainage. It is bounded by the Colorado state line on the east, the Cross Canyon Road (San Juan County Route 214) and private land, on the south, and the road across Squaw Point on the west and north. Vegetation consists primarily of juniper trees, along with some piñon pine, Mormon tea, and bitterbrush. Cottonwood, willows, and tamarisk thrive along the perennial waters of Cross Canyon.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Benches leading down to the perennial water in Cross Canyon appear predominantly natural, with human imprints being largely unnoticeable. However, Squaw Point was chained in the mid-1960s; although the plateau shows some signs of returning to a natural vegetative regime, the chaining is noticeable and the area is not natural. An old constructed route leads to the top of Squaw Point, forming the boundary of the area with wilderness characteristics.

The remainder of the unit appears essentially natural, with the exception of one cherry-stemmed road (.7 miles long) leading to a large stock pond.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit is contiguous with the Cross Canyon WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for solitude. There are opportunities for solitude in the side drainages of Cross Canyon, but given the small size of this unit, these opportunities are outstanding only in association with the contiguous WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The unit is contiguous with the Cross Canyon WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit itself possesses opportunities for hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, photography, and visiting prehistoric cultural sites in a primitive setting. Because of the small size of this unit, however, these opportunities are outstanding only in association with the contiguous WSA.

Supplemental Values

Impressive archaeological sites, consisting of standing walls of core-and-veneer construction, are found in the unit. Although the chaining on Squaw Point destroyed several sites, those remaining are of such quality that they have been included in proposals for a regional Anasazi National Park. The permanent water source in Cross Canyon makes this area especially rich in wildlife.

CROSS CANYON— A view of the southern end of the Cross Canyon inventory unit.



BLM photo

Cross Canyon

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

