

Hunter Canyon

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
4,600	1,200	5,800 (98%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
30	60	90 (2%)
Inventory Unit Total		
4,630	1,260	5,890
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

Most of the Hunter Canyon inventory unit (5,800 acres) has wilderness characteristics. Except for several small areas (90 acres) around the boundary, the unit appears natural and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The federal portion of the unit is slightly less than 5,000 acres, but the unit is of sufficient size and configuration to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. The rugged topography provides many opportunities within deep canyons and among the maze of rock fins and domes to find quiet, isolated locations and to enjoy hiking, exploring, and other forms of primitive recreation.

Unit Description

Hunter Canyon is part of a spectacular 50-square-mile labyrinth of exposed and eroded Navajo Sandstone fins, domes, arches, and deeply cut canyons. The unit lies southwest of the town of Moab, straddling the Grand and San Juan County boundaries. A road separates the unit from the Behind the Rocks Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

The unit contains spectacular natural rock arches similar to those found in nearby

Arches National Park. It has extremely rugged topography; travel through the maze of steep-walled canyons, domes, arches, and fins is arduous. Riparian plant species can be found in Hunter Canyon, while piñon pine, juniper, and blackbrush grow between the bare rock fins.

Dispersed recreation activities, including hiking, exploring, car camping, mountain biking, jeep tours, and sightseeing, are current uses of the area, with most of these activities taking place near the boundaries. Past mining activities occurred near the rim of Hunter Canyon and along the boundary road near the Colorado River.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the unit retains its natural character. Inaccessibility created by the rugged topography has confined impacts to the boundary roads. One rough cherry-stemmed road runs along the rim of Hunter Creek to an abandoned drill hole. Natural character has been lost near the access to the Pritchett Arch trail and near Halls Bridge because of heavily used camping and parking areas and associated vehicle routes. Numerous camping and parking areas along the boundary in Kane Springs Canyon have also affected wilderness characteristics. However, other imprints of man, such as seldom-used vehicle ways and camping sites along the boundary roads, are substantially unnoticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding for most of the unit. The nature of the

terrain provides many opportunities to find quiet, isolated locations within the rugged canyons and drainages and among the rock fins and domes. Only along the boundary roads, on well-traveled trails, and near the more popularly visited arches is solitude briefly interrupted. Feelings of solitude are further enhanced by the remoteness and outstanding solitude opportunities afforded by the adjacent Behind the Rocks WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for unconfined, primitive forms of recreation are outstanding. There are plenty of opportunities for exploring among the rock fins, arches, and archaeological sites. Limited backpacking trips are possible, although water sources are scarce except in parts of Hunter Canyon. Local trail guides suggest a number of hiking routes, and many unpublished routes can be found among the maze of spectacular topographic features between the southern boundary and Pritchett Canyon to the north. Outstanding scenic views are afforded from elevated spots within the unit.

Supplemental Values

The unit has spectacular scenery and unusual geologic formations. The fins of eroded Navajo Sandstone; the high concentration of natural arches (e.g., Pritchett Arch, Halls Bridge, Funnel Arch, and Hunter Arch); the domes, sand dunes, and deep canyons; and the stunning panoramas all add up to an absorbing and dramatic scene. Many archaeological and historical sites also contribute to the richness of the unit.

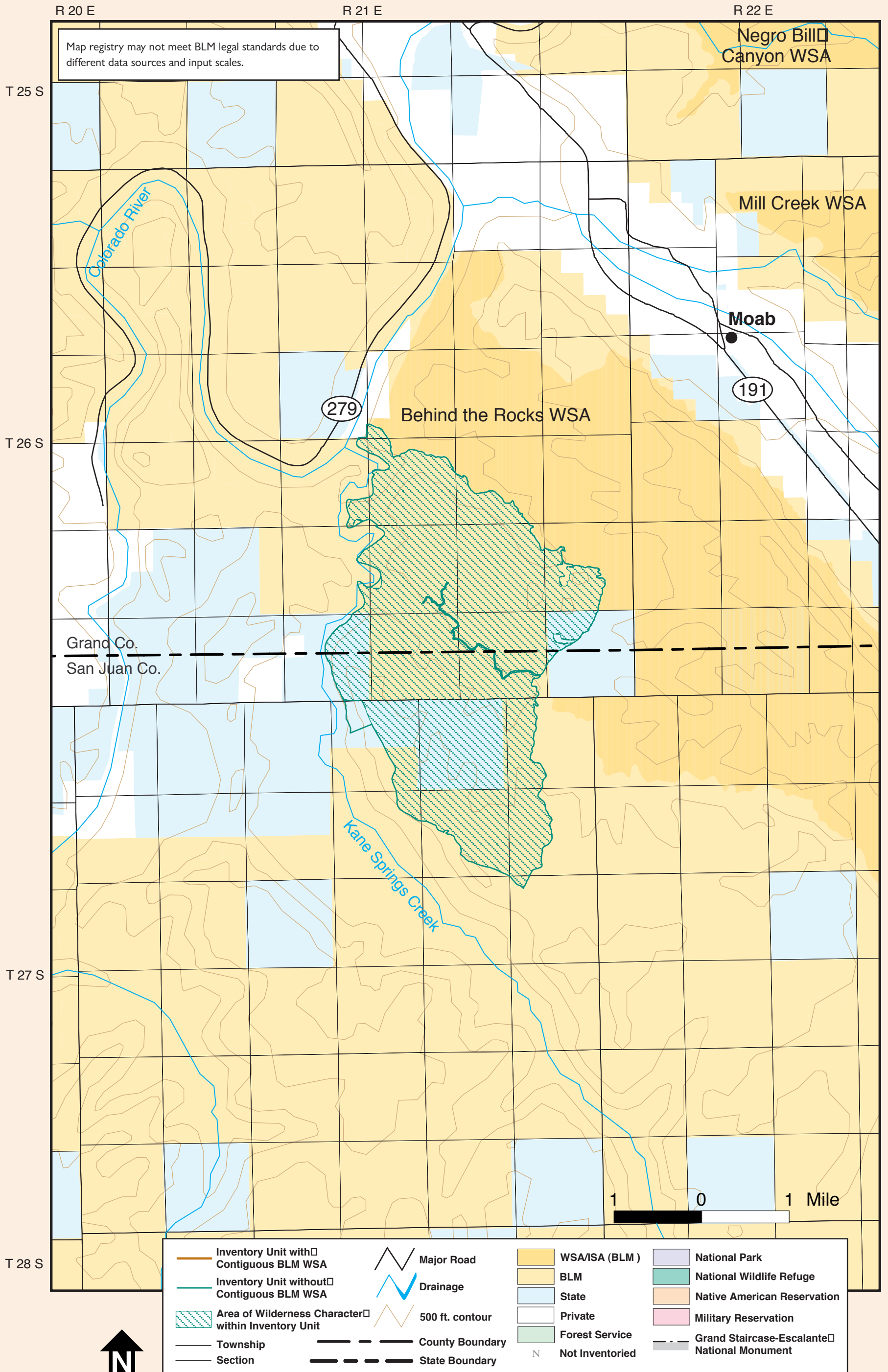
HUNTER CANYON—

The extremely rugged terrain provides opportunities for hiking, exploration, and finding seclusion from others.



Jerry Sintz

Hunter Canyon



SOUTHEAST REGION—Hunter Canyon