

# Grand Gulch

## Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
<b>With Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
47,800	8,090	55,890 (95%)
<b>Without Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
1,770	1,220	2,990 (5%)
<b>Inventory Unit Total</b>		
49,570	9,310	58,880
<b>Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
Grand Gulch ISA Complex		107,920
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area— San Juan Unit		12,850

The vast majority of the eleven Grand Gulch inventory units (55,890 acres) appear natural and retain their wilderness characteristics. These units are associated with the Grand Gulch Instant Study Area (ISA) Complex, one of the premier areas for primitive recreation in the southwestern United States. However, portions of the inventory units (2,990 acres) have been so modified by human activities, such as chaining or wood cutting, that wilderness characteristics has been lost. The outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation found in the contiguous ISA Complex and the San Juan Unit of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness, extend into the inventory units.

## Unit Description

The Grand Gulch inventory units are located in south-central San Juan County about 25 to 50 miles southwest of Blanding. All of the inventory units except Unit 7 are contiguous with the ISA Complex. In the case of Unit 5, the inventory unit is contiguous to the ISA Complex along a vehicle way that runs for two miles along the southern boundary of the unit. Units 6, 7, and 8 are also contiguous to the San Juan Unit of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA), which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness by the National Park Service (NPS).

## Wilderness Characteristics

### Naturalness

Units 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 are predominantly natural throughout. The wild land of Grand Gulch Plateau in Unit 1 appears natural for the most part; however, the

large chaining on Mormon Flat, along with an adjacent enclosure, is substantially noticeable. Also lacking in natural character are small areas around two stock ponds (including one with a short cherry-stem) and a corral. Unit 3 appears predominantly natural; numerous seismic exploration lines seen on aerial photographs are unnoticeable on the ground. Small areas without wilderness characteristics include intrusions such as old bladed rights-of-way and a large stock pond. The unit contains one 2.5-mile-long cherry-stemmed route to a developed stock pond. Unit 4 is separated from Unit 3 by the access route to Collins Spring (San Juan County Route 260), which has been cherry-stemmed. There is one 0.25-mile cherry-stemmed route to an old drill hole; otherwise, Unit 4 appears natural. The flat areas of Unit 9 were chained and are without wilderness characteristics; only the portion of the unit outside the chained area appears natural. So many wood-cutting vehicle ways exist in the northern portion of Unit 10 that the cumulative effect over much of the unit has impacted its wilderness characteristics. In addition, part of the state section was chained and has not recovered sufficiently to appear natural. Only broken headwaters and other remote portions of the unit are predominantly free of human impacts.

## Outstanding Opportunities

### Solitude

The inventory units are contiguous either to the ISA Complex or to a portion of the Glen Canyon NRA that has been administratively endorsed for wilderness. These contiguous areas have outstanding opportunities for solitude. In Unit 1, the forest of the Grand Gulch plateau and deep canyon of upper Grand Gulch provide excellent opportunities for solitude on their own. Units 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 11 provide outstanding opportunities for solitude only when considered as extensions of contiguous areas with wilderness characteristics. Unit 3 offers outstanding opportunities for solitude in its own right;

the area is only infrequently visited and the wide-open landscape makes one feel all the more alone. The relatively isolated Unit 6 also offers excellent opportunities for solitude. Much of Unit 10 is without wilderness characteristics; however, the remaining parts offer opportunities for solitude as an extension of the ISA Complex. Although the opportunities for solitude vary among the individual units, all eleven add to the outstanding opportunities found within the contiguous ISA Complex and NPS lands.

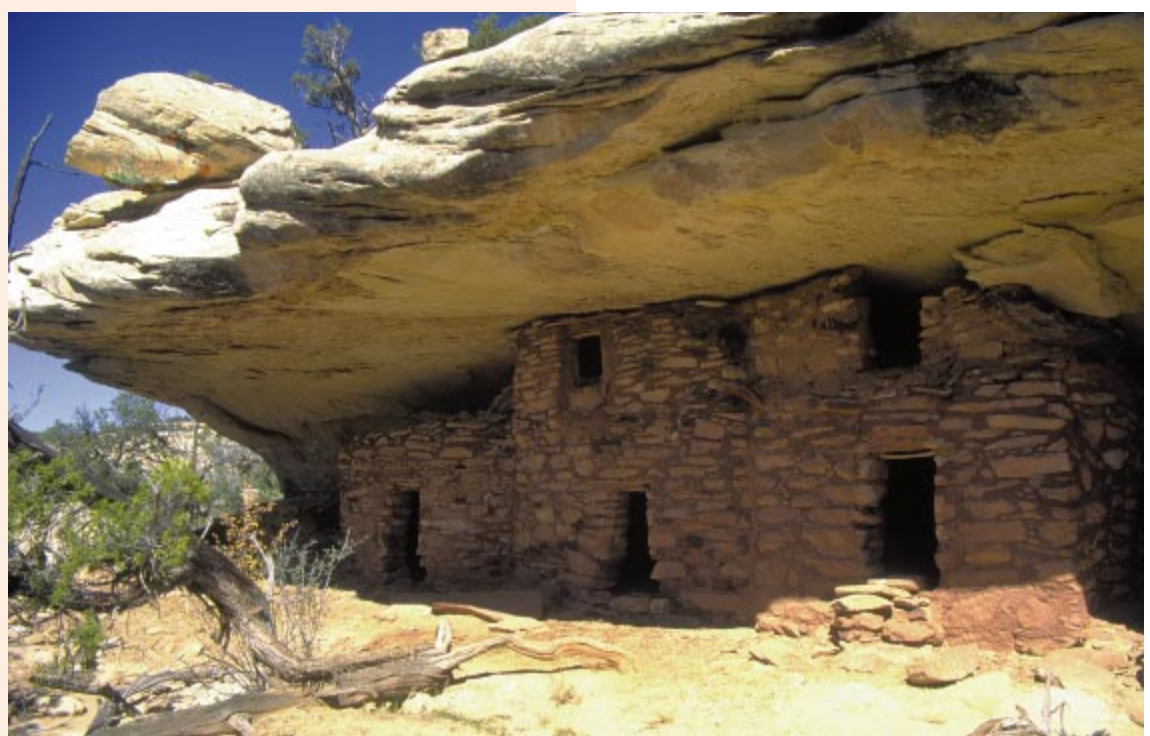
## Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory units are contiguous either to the ISA Complex or to a portion of the Glen Canyon NRA that has been administratively endorsed for wilderness. These contiguous ISA Complex and NPS lands possess outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, including horseback riding, backpacking, hiking, climbing, photography, and cultural and historical exploration. All of these outstanding opportunities extend into the inventory units. The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation vary among the individual units, but all eleven add to the outstanding opportunities found within the contiguous ISA Complex and NPS lands.

## Supplemental Values

The breathtaking scenery and fascinating geology of many of the Grand Gulch inventory units are important supplemental values. The presence of the Hole-In-The-Rock Emigrant Trail testifies to an important historical episode in the Euro-American settlement of the Four Corners area. Most outstanding, however, are the hundreds of archaeological sites within the inventory units—evidence of a rich and vibrant human past in this region.

**GRAND GULCH**—The Grand Gulch inventory units and the contiguous Grand Gulch ISA Complex are rich in archaeological sites and other evidence of past human occupation.



Eric Finstick



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