

The Narrows

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
20,400	1,100	21,500 (99%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
200	0	200 (1%)
Inventory Unit Total		
20,600	1,100	21,700
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 21,500 acres of The Narrows inventory unit have wilderness characteristics, while 200 acres do not. The unit encompasses remote and rugged piñon and juniper woodlands separated by mountain tops, canyons, and foothills, along with five miles of perennial free-flowing stream within Beaver Dam Wash. The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and is popular for hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing. A spectacular area known as The Narrows of Beaver Dam Wash provides opportunities for enjoying wildlife and a riparian ecosystem made up of willows, cottonwoods, and sedges. The unit provides habitat for a large deer herd as well as sensitive native fishes.

Several areas were found to be unnatural and lack wilderness characteristics because of the cumulative effects of human activities, including water pipelines, established and well-used deer camps, vehicle ways, OHV use areas, and a stream gaging station.

Unit Description

The unit is located on the Utah-Nevada state line about 30 miles northwest of St. George in Washington County. It contains rugged mountains and numerous side canyons covered by dense piñon and juniper stands with a mountain mahogany understory. Yucca and desert shrubs exist along the lower-elevation foothills. The elevation transitions from a low of 3,800 feet in Beaver Dam Wash near the rural town of Motoqua to 5,629 feet at the summit of Bull Mountain about 4 miles west. The unit is bisected by 8.5 miles of Beaver Dam Wash, which includes a particularly narrow and steep-sided riparian area known as The Narrows. This wash supports an outstanding willow, cottonwood, and sedge riparian ecosystem.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Many intrusions were documented during the inventory, but most of these human features have been excluded from the unit boundaries. Most of the unit is natural and roadless, with little evidence of human activity. The principal human intrusions include 21 vehicle ways totaling 11.1 miles in length, six segments of range fence totaling 10.6 miles in length, and two reseeded fire-burned areas. The vehicle ways receive little or no use and are substantially unnoticeable. Many of these were associated with mineral exploration and are now unmaintained, often impassible, and heavily eroded. Large wildfires have occurred frequently within the southern portion of the unit, but the burned areas are now returning to a natural appearance.

Several areas (totaling 200 acres) are unnatural and lack wilderness characteristics because of the cumulative effects of camping, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, a pipeline, a stream gaging station, vehicle ways, and roads. The roads to Dodge Spring, Holts Cabin, and Dobin Mine have been cherry-stemmed from the unit, along with associated developments including the Dodge Spring pipeline, the Dobin Mine, several permanent deer hunting camps, and two parcels of private land.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The rugged

terrain, dense vegetation, and deeply incised drainages provide excellent screening that separates visitors from the sights and sounds of others. A visitor is able to seek and experience seclusion within this remote area.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are available, including day hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, backpacking, and horseback riding. Opportunities for deer hunting and wildlife viewing are especially outstanding and popular, as evidenced by the abundance of road-side deer camps. Beaver Dam Wash provides a rare opportunity for native trout fishing. The rock formations within Beaver Dam Wash and the distant views of surrounding Navajo sandstone formations in lower desert areas provide outstanding opportunities for geologic sightseeing and photography.

Supplemental Values

The inventory unit possesses outstanding opportunities for wildlife viewing, contains regionally significant hydrologic and riparian values, exhibits striking geologic features, and provides numerous traditional locations for family gatherings and hunting camps. Portions of the unit have been determined eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation and are proposed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern for riparian and watershed values. The section of Beaver Dam Wash within the unit is the longest free-flowing and perennial portion of this 54-mile-long intermittent wash that crosses the Utah-Nevada state line. It provides habitat for both native trout and the Virgin spinedace.

THE NARROWS—The distant Clover Mountains in Nevada (outside the unit) provide a backdrop for one of the tributary drainages to The Narrows.



BLM photo

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