

Joshua Tree

Findings

| INVENTORY UNIT ACRES | | |
|---|-------|--------------|
| Federal | State | Total |
| With Wilderness Characteristics | | |
| 9,500 | 900 | 10,400 (70%) |
| Without Wilderness Characteristics | | |
| 3,500 | 1,000 | 4,500 (30%) |
| Inventory Unit Total | | |
| 13,000 | 1,900 | 14,900 |
| Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics | | |
| Joshua Tree ISA (UT-ISA-010) | | 1,040 |

About 10,400 acres of the Joshua Tree inventory unit have wilderness characteristics, while 4,500 acres do not. The inventory unit is roadless, appears mostly natural, and provides visitors with outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, including technical rock climbing. In addition, the area contains an outstanding example of the transition zone (between the Colorado Plateau/Great Basin and the Mojave Desert) where a higher-elevation piñon and juniper woodland changes to a lower-elevation Joshua tree forest.

Portions of the unit lack wilderness characteristics for two reasons. The northeast portion is unnatural primarily because of the presence of two large private parcels containing substantially noticeable mining impacts, with similar impacts on bordering state and public land. The western portion is unnatural because of an accumulation of water developments linked by a pipeline cutting across the unit. A communication site, a mine, and a range development have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Unit Description

The Joshua Tree inventory unit is located near the extreme southwest corner of Utah in western Washington County about 35 miles west of St. George. The unit contains the southern extent of the Beaver Dam Mountains in Utah, with a scenic crest at an elevation of approximately 6,784 feet. Part of the largest stand of Joshua trees in the northern extent of their range is found here. The remainder of the unit consists of steep, uneven topography down to the lower elevations between 3,000 feet and 4,000 feet, where the piñon and juniper woodland changes to a forest of Joshua trees. A spectacular high-elevation divide within the Beaver Dam Mountains is located in the center of the unit, with side canyons containing plant and wildlife diversity, interesting geology, and scenic beauty. The Woodbury

Desert Research Site, a desert tortoise research area, is located within the unit. The unit surrounds the Joshua Tree Instant Study Area and National Natural Landmark.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

About 70% of the inventory unit appears natural. Only a few small and insignificant adits and naturally rehabilitating vehicle ways related to mining access remain in the natural-appearing portion of the unit.

Two areas significantly impacted by mining and grazing management activities were found to be unnatural. A substantially noticeable mine, considerable mine workings, and blade work in the north have rendered this area unnatural. A series of range facilities, linked with a common pipeline, result in the western portion of the unit being unnatural.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, given its diverse terrain, vegetative screening, and general size and shape. It provides many opportunities for visitors to enjoy seclusion in the rugged, precipitous topography of the Beaver Dam Mountains. High peaks, geologic features, side canyons, notches, ridges, and desert basins offer a variety of topographic features to shield visitors

from others in the area and from outside sights and sounds. There are many areas where visitors can seek and find a secluded place in the midst of this rugged landscape.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Outstanding opportunities exist for technical rock climbing, given the sheer walls of the mountain divide, including a face known locally as the "diamond". This area was recently written up in a southern Utah climbing magazine; nearly 50 routes exist up one side canyon alone. Spires, boulders, hanging valleys, and seasonal waterfalls all add to the recreation experience. Backpacking, day hiking, hunting, photography, nature study, horseback riding, camping, geological and general sightseeing, bird watching, and wildlife viewing all offer excellent prospects for primitive recreation.

Supplemental Values

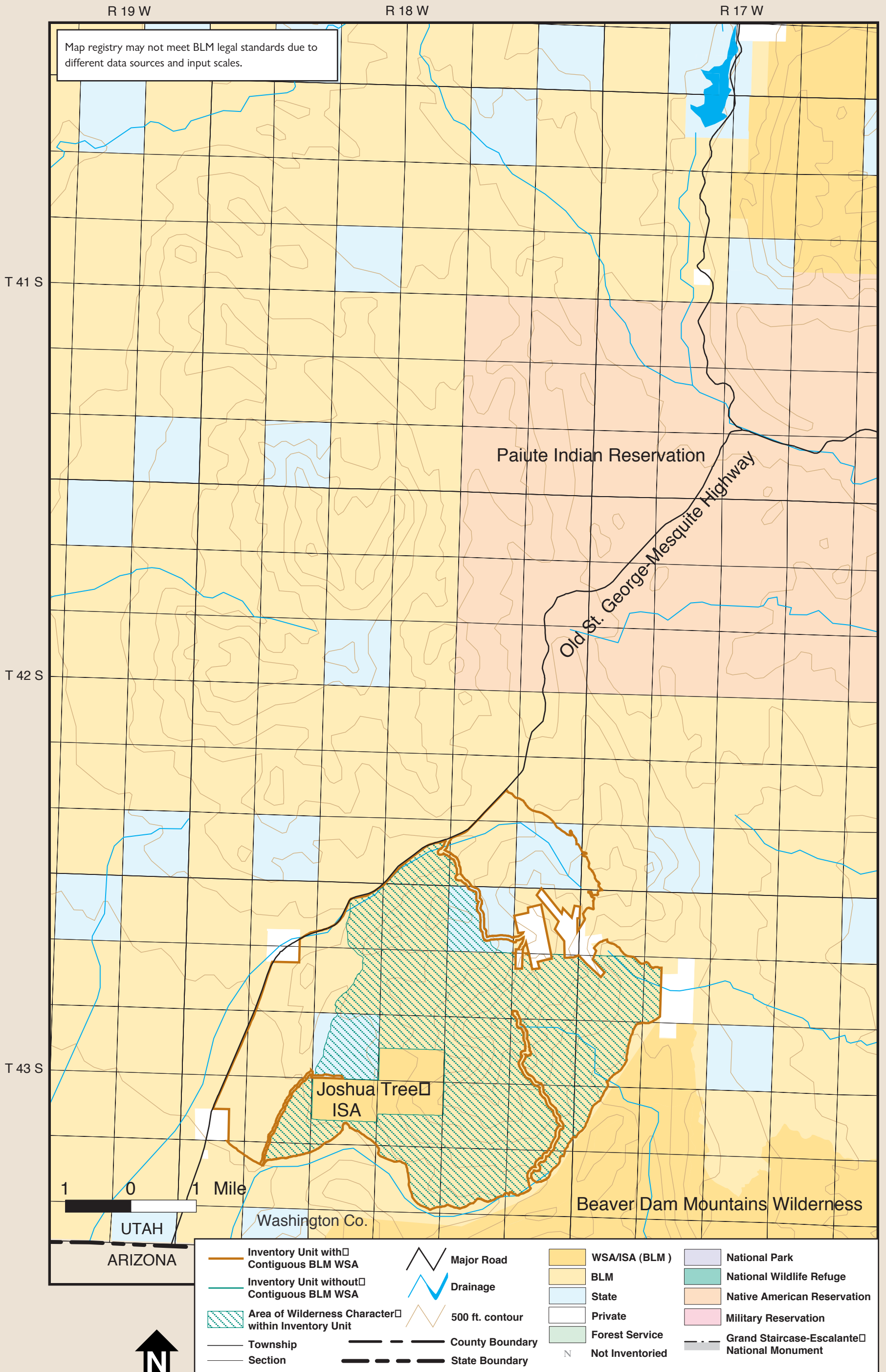
Spectacular scenic viewpoints and the impressive divide along the Beaver Dam Mountains are supplemental values, along with the apparently growing regional and possibly national interest in the sport of technical rock climbing. Bio-diversity is high because of the presence of the transition zone between piñon-juniper woodlands of the Colorado Plateau and the Joshua Tree forest of the Mojave Desert. Historic mining could also be considered a supplemental value, given the extreme heights at which the mining took place, combined with the technical skill it took to remove the material with little mechanical access.



JOSHUA TREE—Joshua trees are a unique part of this inventory unit; a portion of the largest stand in the northern extent of their range is found here.

BLM photo

Joshua Tree



SOUTHWEST REGION—Joshua Tree