

Upper Kanab Creek

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
42,100	5,900	48,000 (99%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
300	10	310 (1%)
Inventory Unit Total		
42,400	5,910	48,310
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 48,000 acres of the Upper Kanab Creek inventory unit possess wilderness characteristics. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation abound. The unit also contains exceptional scenery and geological values. However, there are approximately 310 acres along the boundary of the unit that do not possess wilderness characteristics. These areas have either been chained and seeded, contain developments serving the needs of local communities, or have been significantly marred with trails created by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-highway vehicles (OHVs).

Unit Description

The Upper Kanab Creek unit is located 15 miles north and northwest of Kanab. The western portion is adjacent to a number of communities located in Long Valley, while the eastern part is within BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

The Upper Kanab Creek area is exceptionally scenic, forming the backdrop for tourists traveling Highway 89 between Zion National Park (NP), Bryce Canyon NP, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. It is divided into two distinct areas by the prominent White Cliffs, a striking escarpment formed by Navajo Sandstone. These cliffs are one of the principal steps in the Grand Staircase cliff-lines between the Grand Canyon and Bryce Canyon.

Navajo Sandstone has many erosional variations and exhibits an impressive spectrum of colors and textures. Numerous canyons have been cut into the White Cliffs; these sometimes narrow into convoluted slot canyons that have been polished by frequent

flash floods. Where canyons are more open, they frequently contain an attractive combination of ponderosa pine and areas of colorful sandstone or sand dunes. Lower elevations contain large, dense stands of piñon and juniper. There are also areas of scattered ponderosa pines and stretches of riparian vegetation along the perennial reaches of Kanab Creek. A large part of the unit is just north of the wells that supply culinary water for Kanab. The unit is used for both grazing and recreation.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the unit has retained its natural character. However, there are a number of minor human imprints scattered along the unit's edge and near the lower part of Upper Kanab Creek, including 31 vehicle ways (mostly short spurs) totaling 24.9 miles and four identified OHV/ATV play areas, along with additional lengths of cross-country tracked routes. The Sand Hills, the largest play area, is located in the unit's south-central area just south of Red Canyon. Most of these vehicle ways and ATV/OHV play areas are substantially unnoticeable and are located in sandy and seasonally erosional areas. The unit also contains some livestock management facilities, including five fences (totaling 5.0 miles), two stock tanks, a pipeline, and a sheep camp. However, these features

UPPER KANAB CREEK—Vegetation provides a contrast with the White Cliffs of Johnson Canyon, where numerous extensive hiking and horseback riding opportunities exist.



Jerry Sintz

blend into the vast landscapes and are substantially unnoticeable.

Several parts of the unit have unnatural character. Nine vehicle ways were judged to be substantially noticeable in the area as a whole and have been cherry-stemmed. There are also several sites substantially disturbed by chainings, a landfill, a radio tower, a corral, and mineral material extraction.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit possesses many outstanding opportunities for solitude, thanks to the area's natural character, rugged terrain, plant screening, shape, and size. The unit consists of rolling topography broken by a complex series of canyons and cliffs. The rugged topography alone provides abundant screening. The unit's central core, centered on Upper Kanab Creek, is over six miles wide and long.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

A visitor to the unit finds an abundance of primitive recreation opportunities because of the unit's natural character, scenery, rugged terrain, and size. The rugged cliffs, canyons, and mesas fronting the White Cliffs provide abundant and extensive hiking and horseback riding opportunities. There is the potential for trips to or around the Elkheart Cliffs, Red Hollow, Dianas Throne, Upper Kanab Creek, Cutler Point, Dry Leaf Canyon, Burnt Cedar Point, and Swamp Canyon. Long hikes and horseback trips through Upper Kanab Creek would be especially outstanding. Opportunities are equally outstanding for short day hikes, backpacking, hunting, geological study, sightseeing, photography, and camping.

Supplemental Values

The unit is exceptionally scenic. The Navajo Sandstone of the White Cliffs escarpment forms a colorful backdrop for travelers on Highway 89. Most tourists traveling between Zion NP, Bryce Canyon NP and the North Rim of Grand Canyon NP pass this way. The unit also provides critical winter range for the important Paunsaugunt deer herd.

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