

Notch Peak

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
11,660	2,060	13,720 (98%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
210	100	310 (2%)
Inventory Unit Total		
11,870	2,160	14,030
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Notch Peak WSA (UT-050-078)		51,130

About 13,720 acres of the ten Notch Peak inventory units have wilderness characteristics. These units are contiguous to and form an extension of the Notch Peak Wilderness Study Area (WSA). With the exception of three small areas, the units are natural, with the few human impacts not being noticeable in the area as a whole. However, about 310 acres in Units 4, 8, and 10 are unnatural and do not possess wilderness characteristics because of a flood-control dike and mining disturbances. Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and recreation are present in association with the contiguous WSA. The large benches on the west side especially complement and enhance the opportunities found within the WSA. The units also possess geologic, botanic, and wildlife habitat values that supplement their wilderness characteristics.

Unit Description

The Notch Peak inventory units are located in Millard County about 45 miles southwest of Delta in the southern portion of the House Range. The inventory area features an impressive collection of land forms. The enormous west face of Notch Peak has been called “the desert equivalent of Yosemite’s El Capitan”; its rise of nearly 4,450 feet makes it one of the highest cliffs in North America. The bulk of the units consist of the western alluvial fans between the House Range and Tule Valley. While much of the Notch Peak inventory units are dominated by piñon-juniper or sagebrush-shadscale communities, impressive stands of large aspen and conifers grow at higher elevations. The

highest ridges and peaks support a healthy population of ancient bristlecone pine. Sagebrush, shadscale, Mormon tea, and various annual and perennial grasses cover the undulating western slopes.

While mining exploration historically took place at the base of these slopes, the predominant current use appears to be sheep grazing in the winter. Camping, hunting, rockhounding, and hiking also occur. The western alluvial fans offer tremendous views of the spectacular limestone escarpment on Notch Peak itself. And views from Notch Peak and Bald Mountain offer unparalleled panoramas of valleys and mountains for a hundred miles in any direction. One can even see the Bonneville Salt Flats 120 miles to the north.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

The Notch Peak inventory units generally retain their natural character. They are enhanced by and are logical extensions of the contiguous Notch Peak WSA. Human developments found in the units are substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole. However, three portions of the inventory area in Units 4, 8, and 10 were found to be unnatural because of a large flood-control dike and mining disturbances.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The Notch Peak inventory units have outstanding opportunities for solitude when considered as an extension of the Notch Peak WSA. Units 2 and 3 combined are

large enough to offer outstanding opportunities for solitude on their own. These open brush- and tree-covered western benches of the House Range have a subtle but complex topography that offers solitude. Tall stands of trees and the narrow, deep canyon bottom offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. The remainder of the units possess outstanding opportunities for solitude only in association with the contiguous WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Notch Peak inventory units have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation when considered as an extension of the Notch Peak WSA. All the units possess opportunities for recreation, but these opportunities are outstanding only in the context of the contiguous WSA.

Supplemental Values

The western flanks of the House Range in Unit 3 have several good examples of ancient lake terraces. The units include an impressive variety of landforms and vegetative communities, with the highest ridges and peaks supporting a healthy population of ancient bristlecone pine. Three sensitive plant species occur in the area: two species of wild buckwheat, *Erigonum ammophilum* and *Erigonum nummulare*, and a milkvetch, *Astragalus callithrix*, all of which are candidates for listing as threatened or endangered plants. A rare plant known as *Primula domensis* is also found. Mule deer, antelope, coyote, cougar, badger, and a variety of raptors call the Notch Peak area their home. The units are crucial habitat for golden eagles, as well as the endangered bald eagle and peregrine falcon.



NOTCH PEAK—A view of one of the inventory units in the middle distance, with the contiguous Notch Peak WSA in the background.

BLM photo

Notch Peak

