

King Top

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
1,400	2,120	3,520 (90%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	400	400 (10%)
Inventory Unit Total		
1,400	2,520	3,920
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
King Top WSA (UT-050-070)		84,770

About 3,520 acres of the five King Top inventory units appear natural and have wilderness characteristics. Several vehicle ways and a fence are present but do not dominate the landscape; natural landforms prevail. However, about 400 acres in Unit 3 in the southwestern part of the inventory area do not have wilderness characteristics because of the presence of mining exploration roads. The units enhance existing outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation found in the contiguous King Top Wilderness Study Area (WSA), opportunities that extend to the units themselves. Their wilderness characteristics is enhanced by the presence of threatened, endangered, or candidate plant and animal species, Ordovician fossils, and a small wild horse herd.

Unit Description

The King Top inventory units are located in the Confusion Range of southwestern Millard County about 50 miles southwest of Delta. The Confusion Range is typical of the Intermountain Sagebrush Province. The inventory units are contiguous to the King Top WSA, about 19 miles from

north to south and 17 miles at its widest point from east to west. Like most other mountain ranges in the Great Basin, the Confusion Range rises abruptly above the surrounding desert valleys. The range differs from other Great Basin ranges, however, in that the summit is almost a plateau, a hilly upland with the steepest slopes on the eastern side of the range. Elevations vary from 5,000 feet at the edges of the units to more than 8,000 feet in the WSA. Desert shrubs predominate at the lower elevations, while a piñon-juniper woodland is dominant on the King Top plateau.

Historically, the area has been used principally for mining exploration, personal woodcutting, and livestock grazing. It is also within the King Top Wild Horse Management Area. Other uses include hunting, photography, back-country driving, fossil hunting, and hiking.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the inventory units are essentially undisturbed, with natural landforms dominating the scene. Only minimal evidence of human development exists, including vehicle ways and fencelines, and these are substantially unnoticeable in the units as a whole. However, the western portion of Unit 3 is unnatural because of mining exploration roads. Four cherry-stemmed roads and adjacent developments have been excluded from Units 1, 3, and 4.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The units are contiguous to and form an extension of the King Top WSA. The WSA

possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude. The inventory units provide a logical extension of these outstanding opportunities because of their general remoteness, their vegetative and topographical screening, and the overall size of the inventory area. There are many places to be alone within the canyons and piñon-juniper forests.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The units provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Although the area has little water, opportunities for backpacking, horseback riding, hiking, camping, wild horse viewing, fossil hunting, and photography exist. The lower-elevation country provides expanded areas in which to pursue these recreational activities. The adjacent King Top WSA, one of the more important localities for Ordovician fossils, is frequented by both paleontologists and amateur collectors.

Supplemental Values

Bald eagles and peregrine falcons, both listed as endangered species, inhabit the units. Several candidate species that may also inhabit the units are ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, long-billed curlew, western snowy plover, and white-faced ibis. Fossil Mountain yields some of the best examples of early Ordovician fossils. A small herd of wild horses roams the units, offering visitors a chance to view these animals in a remote wildland setting.

KING TOP—This powerline forms a portion of Unit 1's boundary at the north end of the King Top inventory unit.



BLM photo

King Top

