

Granite Peak

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
15,900	2,400	18,300 (94%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
1,000	200	1,200 (6%)
Inventory Unit Total		
16,900	2,600	19,500
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

About 18,300 acres of the Granite Peak inventory unit have wilderness characteristics. The unit is natural and of sufficient size to provide visitors outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Most intrusions are not substantially noticeable. About 1,200 acres in five areas around the perimeter of the unit lack wilderness characteristics because of impacts from roads, mining activity, and livestock developments.

Unit Description

The Granite Peak inventory unit is located in Beaver County about 15 air miles west of Beaver and is part of the Mineral Mountains. The Mineral Mountains run north to south, with mountain peaks exceeding 8,000 feet in elevation; Granite Peak itself rises to 9,771 feet above sea level. Canyons generally run to the east and west. The west side of the unit is characterized by dramatic granite slabs and enormous standing rocks, while the east side is less dramatic and heavily vegetated by piñon and juniper forests. Views into the range from the west are spectacular, as are views from the range into the valleys to the east and west.

Vegetation at higher elevations and on north-facing slopes is mostly coniferous forests. Piñon and juniper forests are dominant throughout the range, with oak and mountain mahogany abundant on the west side. Mixed mountain brush communities, which include manzanita, provide variety in many areas. Sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and grass are common on ridge tops, in some drainages, and on exposed south slopes. Drainages with flowing water support cottonwood, quaking aspen, and white fir stands, along with typical riparian vegetation.

Mining and cattle grazing are the dominant uses, while hunting is a seasonal use.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the unit appears natural, with human imprints being substantially unnoticeable. The natural portion contains several developments related to mining and livestock grazing, but both their individual and cumulative impact on the unit's natural character is minor. Developments consist of old mines and associated travel routes, water projects, fences, and vehicle ways kept open mostly by hunters and four-wheel drive vehicle use. Overall, the inventory unit is rugged, with steep slopes and deep canyons. The dramatic topography and varied and diverse vegetation cause existing human imprints to be substantially unnoticeable. There are, however, five areas on the unit's boundary that appear unnatural because of roads, mining activities, and livestock facilities. Six roads have been cherry-stemmed from the unit.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit's ample size and rugged terrain ensure outstanding opportunities for solitude. Ridges, valley bottoms, numerous canyons, and large rock outcroppings all provide outstanding opportunities to be alone. The diverse vegetation works in combination with the topography to screen visitors from others and their activities. The cherry-stemmed roads are seldom used.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

This is an area of rugged terrain, with spectacular granite formations and stunning scenery. The unit provides outstanding opportunities for a variety of primitive recreation activities including camping, hiking, photography, rockclimbing, and horseback riding.

Supplemental Values

The unit possesses exceptional scenery and panoramic views of valleys to the east and west. The granite walls and spires are spectacular. Deer and blue grouse provide hunting opportunities, and habitat exists for a variety of birds and small mammals. There are obsidian quarries that were used by Native Americans and early settlers. The combination of piñon and juniper forests growing in conjunction with mountain mahogany, oak, and manzanita is not common in the Great Basin.

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