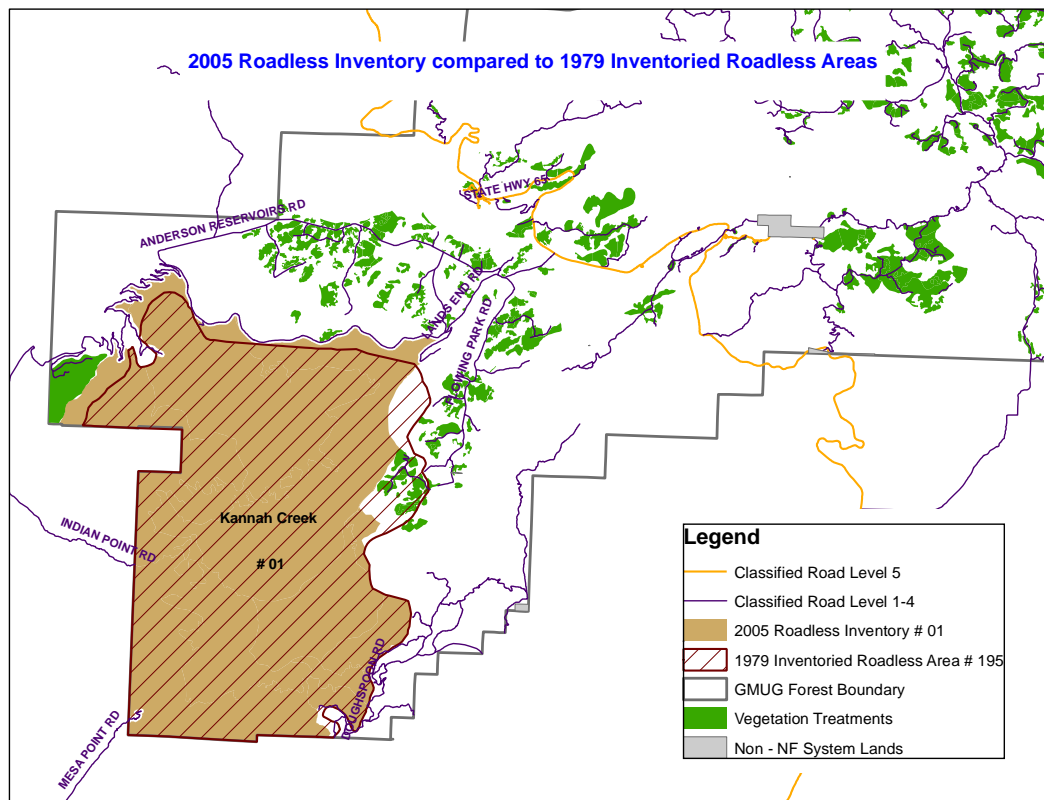


## Rare II # 195 Kannah Creek

**RARE II History** – RARE Unit 195 identified 29,650 acres as roadless and recommended the area for wilderness in the RARE II FEIS. This landscape was not proposed in either of the Colorado Wilderness bills (1980 & 1993) due to its status as a municipal watershed for the city of Grand Junction. Lands that were altered by road construction and timber harvest were removed from the inventory. The remaining acres are described in the **2005 Inventory as unit #20401, Kannah Creek**.

Resource Activities which removed lands of RARE 195 from 2005 inventory:

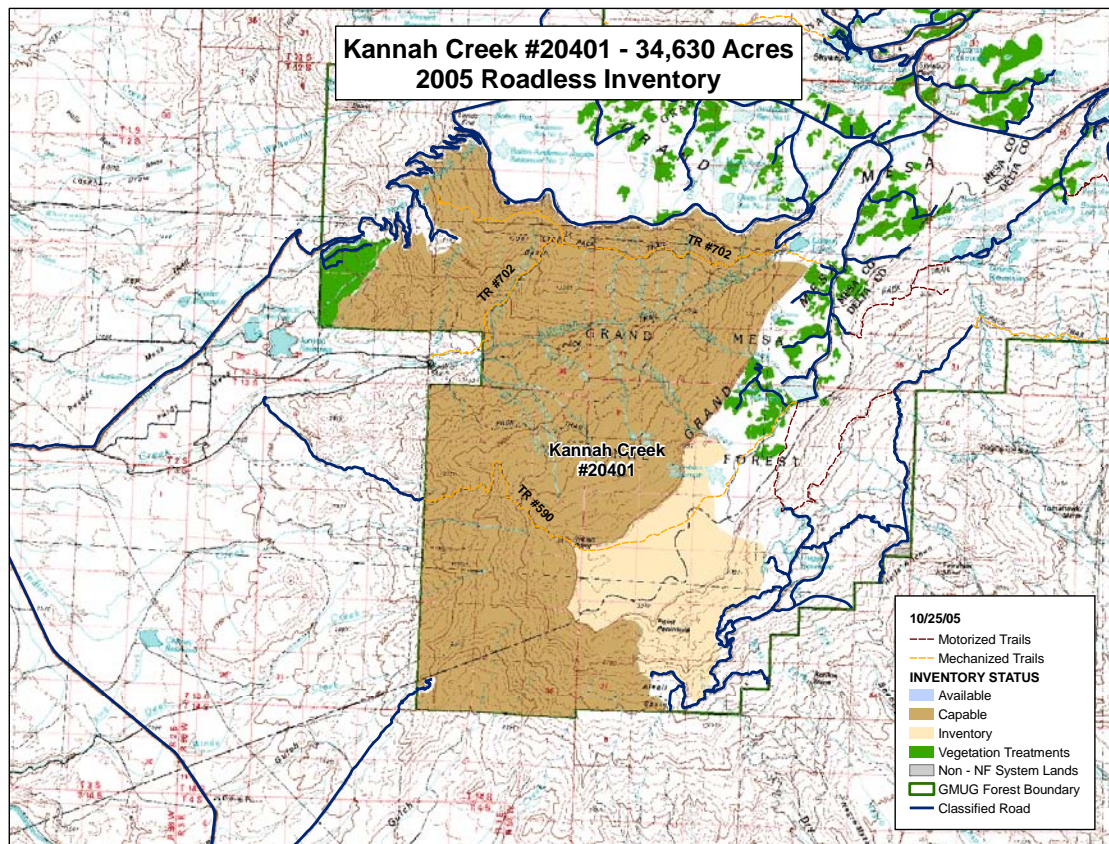
- There are four miles of road
- Vegetation harvest of 413 acres in the Flowing Park area and along road #100 Lands End Road
- Communication site



## 2005 Inventory Description:

### ***Kannah Creek #20401 – 34,630 Acres – Mesa County***

**General Description:** Unit 20401 is located on the west end of the Grand Mesa approximately 17 miles southeast of Grand Junction and 10 miles northwest of Delta. To the west and south, its boundary is the National Forest boundary. The east boundary roughly parallels the rim of Grand Mesa. It contains the headwaters of the Kannah Creek. A small portion, less than 40 acres, of the south boundary is adjacent to the BLM Adobe Badlands WSA.



Elevation Range – 6,000' – 10,300'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 3% Douglas-fir, 30% spruce-fir-fir, 9% spruce-fir-aspen, 7% aspen, 30% spruce-fir-fir, 30% pinyon-juniper, 24% oak-serviceberry, and 17% shrub.

Land Type –

30% 20IH – Semi-arid climate zone; interbedded shales and sandstone geologic materials on steep ridges, escarpments, and mesa sideslopes.

28% 30IH – Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mid to lower mesa and mountain side slopes.

30% 50IH – Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mountain, mesa, and hill slopes.

- Markered as the Grand Mesa Back Country Non-Motorized Recreation Area.

### **Resource Activities:**

#### Current & Ongoing:

- This area is within the Kannah Creek and Point cattle allotments.
- Approximately 10% of this area has pending gas leases. A majority of this area is within a No Lease.
- Winter snowmobile activities above the Rim, on top in the Flowing Park area.
- The Mesa Point Electronic Site is buffered out of the south corner of the area.
- Pending oil and gas lease application for lands along the edges of the unit. One sold in August but currently under protest.
- Recreation trails are within the area:

#### Non-motorized

Coal Creek Trail #702	Kannah Creek Trail #706
Coal Ck Basin Trail #703	Spring Camp Trail #707
Indian Point Trail #715	Indian Point Cut Off #708
Farmers Trail #727	Cheevers Trail #735

### **Wilderness Potential:**

#### Capability:

#### Environment –

- Naturalness – Within the core of the area, natural processes are intact. The Flowing Park/Chambers Reservoir area shows signs of resource activity.
- Solitude – The area is accessed by non-motorized trails. The trail system receives heavy spring and fall use and moderate summer use. Encounters with other users occur along the trail system but not at a level that detracts from the sense of solitude experience. The sense of solitude is greatest within the Kannah Creek Basin. The sense of solitude is lessened in the Flowing Park/Chambers Reservoir area.

Challenge – The Kannah Creek Basin provides opportunities for challenge and self-reliance. The open and flat terrain of the Flowing Park area does not.

#### Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – The area is of a size and configuration to make its preservation practicable.

Boundaries – The rim of the Grand Mesa provides an easily defined boundary and physical barrier separating the roadless area from the Flowing Park area.

Special Features/Activities – Kannah Creek provides municipal water for the City of Grand Junction.

**Evaluation:** The interior core of the unit meets criteria for capability; the Flowing Park area does not. Approximately 28,700 acres (85%) are considered **capable** for wilderness.

Availability (of Capable Lands):

Recreation – Non-motorized trails run through the area; these trails are popular with mountain bike users. Winter oversnow motorized activities occur in the Flowing Park area.

Water – The basin is a part of the municipal watershed for the City of Grand Junction. There are also irrigation ditches in this area.

Timber – There are no suitable timber lands within the capable portion; however, 500 acres of suitable timber land are within the inventory portion.

Minerals – The area has a high potential for oil and gas resources; however, the majority of the area currently has been designated as No Lease. The rest of the area falls under Timing Limitations and CSU, as well as CSU and NSO. There are two lease applications pending along the perimeter of the unit.

Management Considerations – This area lies within the watershed that provides domestic drinking water for the City of Grand Junction. A long standing relationship between the City of Grand Junction and the Forest Service has ensured that the area be managed to provide high water quality. Because this area has the highest occurrence of lightning strikes on the Grand Mesa, vegetation treatments have occurred and are planned to reduce the potential effects of fire on water quality.

**Evaluation** – The area provides drinking water for the City of Grand Junction and is **not available** for wilderness.

Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

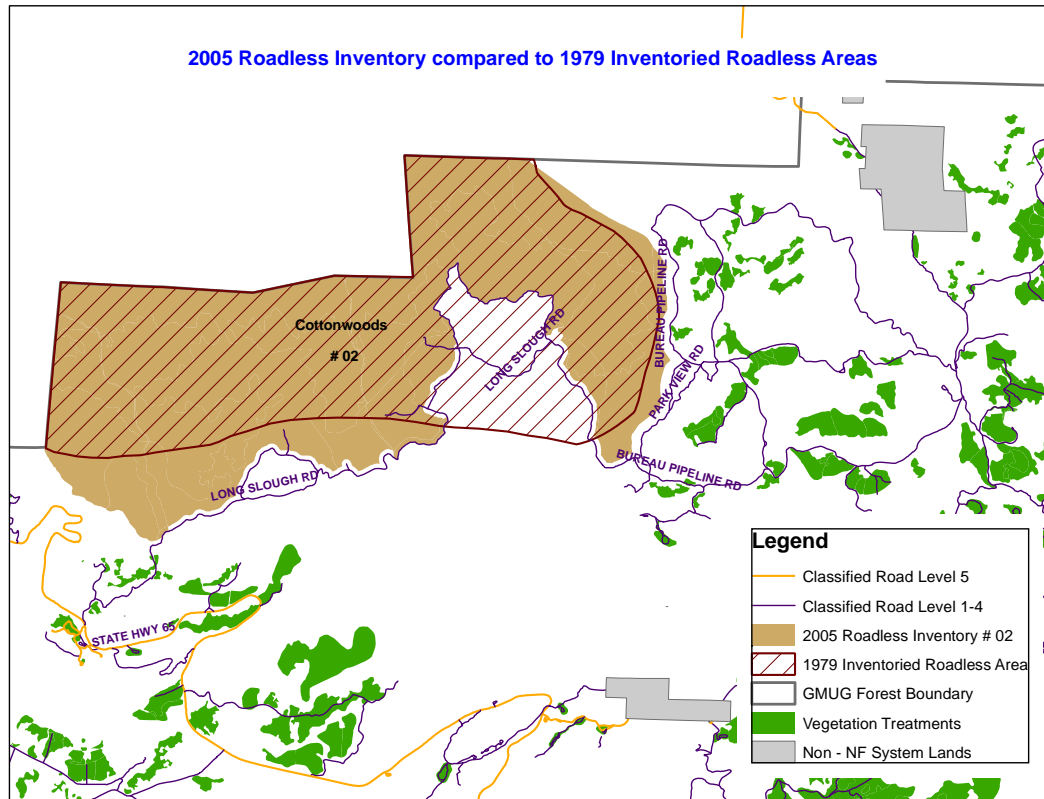
- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 20 miles
- Roubideau Area – 25 miles
- Tabeguache Area – 35 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 40 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 40 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 45 miles

## Rare II # 194 Nick Mountain

**RARE II History** – RARE Unit 194 identified 10,400 as roadless yet did not recommend the area for wilderness in the RARE II FEIS. Lands altered by road construction were removed from the inventory. The remaining acreage is carried forward in the **2005 Inventory as #20402 Cottonwoods**.

Resource Activities which removed lands of RARE 194 from 2005 inventory:

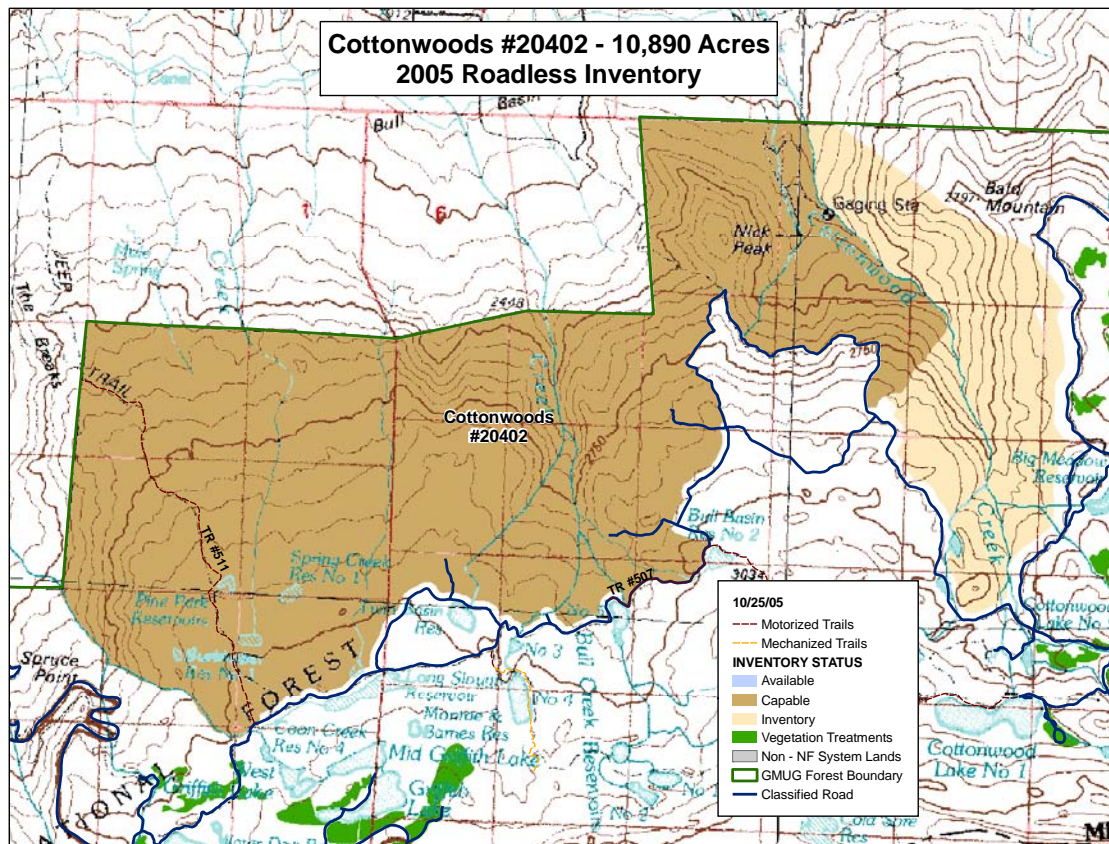
- There are nine miles of road within IRA 194



## 2005 Inventory Descriptions:

### ***Cottonwoods #20402 – 10,890 Acres – Mesa County***

**General Description:** The area is located on the Grand Mesa east of Hwy 65 and approximately eight miles southwest of Collbran. The unit is bounded on the north and west by BLM and private lands. The southern boundary follows the Long Slough Road #254.1A. The east boundary parallels the penstock that transports water from various reservoirs in the Bureau of Reclamation's Collbran Project to power generation stations north of the Forest boundary.



Elevation Range – 7,400' – 10,000'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 62% spruce-fir aspen, 10% aspen, and 24% shrub-oak-serviceberry.

Land Type –

77% 60IH – Montane and Subalpine climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shale geology on mountain slopes, hills, drainage side slopes, and ridges.

23% 30IH – Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mid to lower mesa and mountain side slopes.

**Resource Activities:**Current & Ongoing:

- This area is within the Spring Bull and Cottonwood Creek cattle allotments.
- One motorized trail #511, Crum Reservoir Trail, bisects the west quarter of the area. Motorized roads #254.1A and #259, Bull Basin Trail, run along the southern border.
- Approximately one-fifth of the area has pending gas leases.
- Motorized winter oversnow activities occur in the area.
- Activities include mechanical and prescribed burn for big game habitat, range vegetation, and fuels.
- Fences are maintained using motorized vehicles.
- Existing oil and gas leases in northwest corner of the area.
- Irrigation reservoirs are located within the area.

**Wilderness Potential:**Capability:

## Environment –

- Naturalness – Several thousand acres near Nick Mountain have been controlled burned. Crum Reservoir, a man made development, is within the unit. Other irrigation systems extend into the area from Twin Basin Reservoir and Bull Reservoir. A water transmission line comes out of Cottonwood Creek between Nick and Bald Mountains and runs north to the Forest boundary. A penstock, road and 12.5 KV powerline form the east edge of the area. These activities have modified natural processes in their immediate area. Away from these influences, natural processes are intact and continuing.
- Solitude – Access from the north is difficult; there is no public access across the private land. The area feels remote. Summer recreation use is low, but the sense of solitude is tempered by uses that occur in the vicinity of Long Slough Road #254 and reservoirs to the south and other water uses within the area. Extensive unauthorized motorized use from private lands is a growing problem as lands become developed to the north.

## Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – The area is of a size and shape to protect roadless character.
- Boundaries – The boundaries follow roads and topography. Boundary adjustment to the east and north to follow Cottonwood Creek would improve manageability.

Special Features/Activities – The water transported in the Bureau of Reclamation's penstock is used to generate power.

**Evaluation:** The area between Cottonwood Creek and Bald Mountain has been altered. Manageability of the unit would be improved by adjusting the boundary

to Cottonwood Creek. After boundary adjustments, approximately 8,870 acres (81%) are **capable** of wilderness.

Availability (of Capable Lands):

Recreation – Motorized trail #511 and winter motorized activities occur within the area.

Water – There are several reservoirs and water transmission lines within the area.

Timber – There are approximately 3,300 acres within the capable portion that are tentatively suitable for producing timber for wood fiber production. Another 400 acres of suitable timber land are within the inventory area.

Minerals – The area is considered to have a high potential for oil and gas resources. One existing lease has been awarded in the northwest corner of the area. Existing surface occupancy stipulations for this area are NSO and CSU.

Management Considerations – Pre-existing rights of access for both water resources and oil and gas lease.

**Evaluation** – The area is encumbered with pre-existing rights for water resources and oil and gas lease. Additionally, the area provides motorized recreation opportunities in summer. The area is **not available** for wilderness.

Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 25 miles
- Roubideau Area – 40 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 40 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 40 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 45 miles
- Tabeguache Area – 50 miles

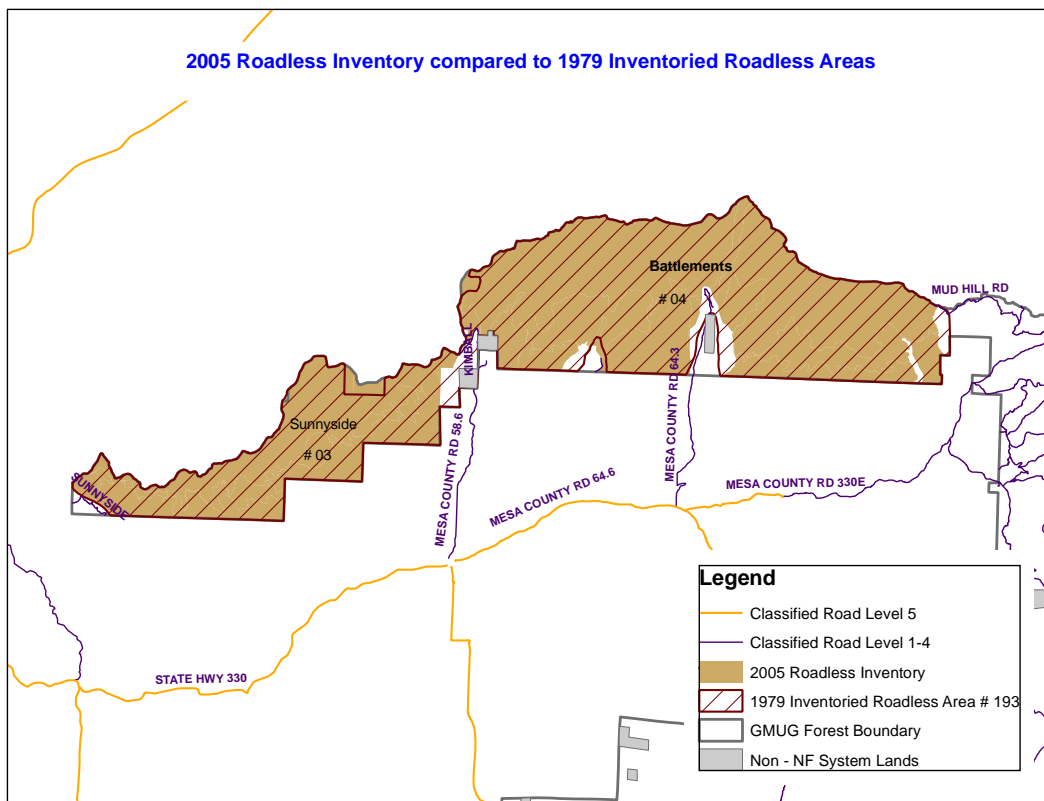


## Rare II # 193 Battlement Mesa

**RARE II History** – RARE Unit 193 identified 36,800 acres as roadless yet did not recommend the area for wilderness in the RARE II FEIS. Lands altered by roads and vegetation manipulations and irrigation ditches were removed from the inventory. Non-National Forest System lands were also removed. The remaining acreage is carried forward in the **2005 Inventory as #20404 Battlements and #20403 Sunnyside**.

Resource Activities which removed lands of RARE 193 from 2005 inventory:

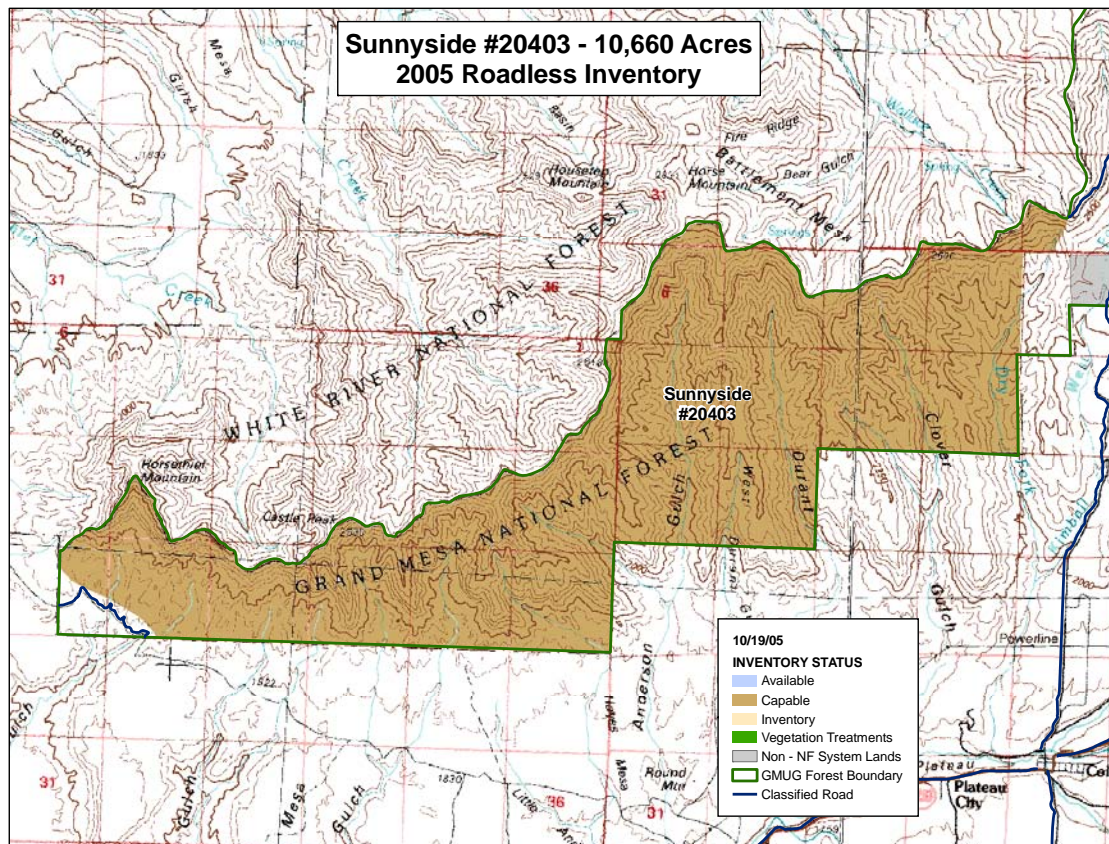
- There are four miles of road within IRA 193
- Vegetation harvest of 73 acres
- Water transmission and irrigation ditches
- Non-National Forest System lands



## 2005 Inventory Descriptions:

### ***Sunnyside #20403 - 10,660 Acres – Mesa County***

**General Description:** The Sunnyside area is located adjacent to Plateau Creek Valley, in which the town of Collbran is located four miles to the south. The area is long and narrow; it ranges from one to three miles wide. Sunnyside is bordered to the north by the White River National Forest, where the lands are managed as Research Natural Area, and elk and bighorn sheep habitat. The south is bounded by roaded and developed BLM and private lands.



Elevation Range – 6,000' – 9,200'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 26% aspen, 26% oak-serviceberry-shrub, 20% pinyon-juniper-oak, 12% spruce-fir-aspen, 9% bare ground, and 5% Douglas-fir.

Land Type –

95% 20IH – Semi-arid climate zone; interbedded shales and sandstone geologic materials on steep ridges, escarpments, and mesa sideslopes.

**Resource Activities:**Current & Ongoing:

- There is no active cattle allotment within this unit; however, cattle trespass into this area from the south.
- Approximately 80% of this area has pending gas leases and 10% is currently under lease.

**Wilderness Potential:**Capability:

## Environment –

- Naturalness – Although extremely hot and dry, natural processes within the area are intact and continuing.
- Solitude – The area is isolated and removed from sights and sounds of development such that a user of the area can experience solitude.

Challenge – The area offers a high degree of challenge. The ruggedness of the landscape and distance from trails and developments provide an opportunity for high degree of challenge.

## Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – Although the area is long and narrow, combined with the RNA along the White River, the area's natural features can be protected.
- Boundaries – The boundaries of the area are adjacent to both private land and BLM lands. Some trespass from private lands may be of a concern.

Special Features/Activities – A herd of mountain sheep is within the unit. There is a proposed Research Natural Area within the unit. From Plateau Valley this area offers a visually striking backdrop.

**Evaluation:** The area meets criteria for capability and is considered **capable** of wilderness.

Availability:

Recreation – There are limited trails and access into the area.

Water – There are no water developments within this unit.

Timber – There are no lands suitable for wood fiber production within this unit.

Minerals – The area has a high potential for oil and gas resources. Currently approximately 90% of the area has existing or pending leases. The area is covered by a No Surface Occupancy Stipulation.

Management Considerations – Pre-existing oil and gas leases.

**Evaluation** – The area is **not available** for wilderness due to pre-existing rights for oil and gas leases.

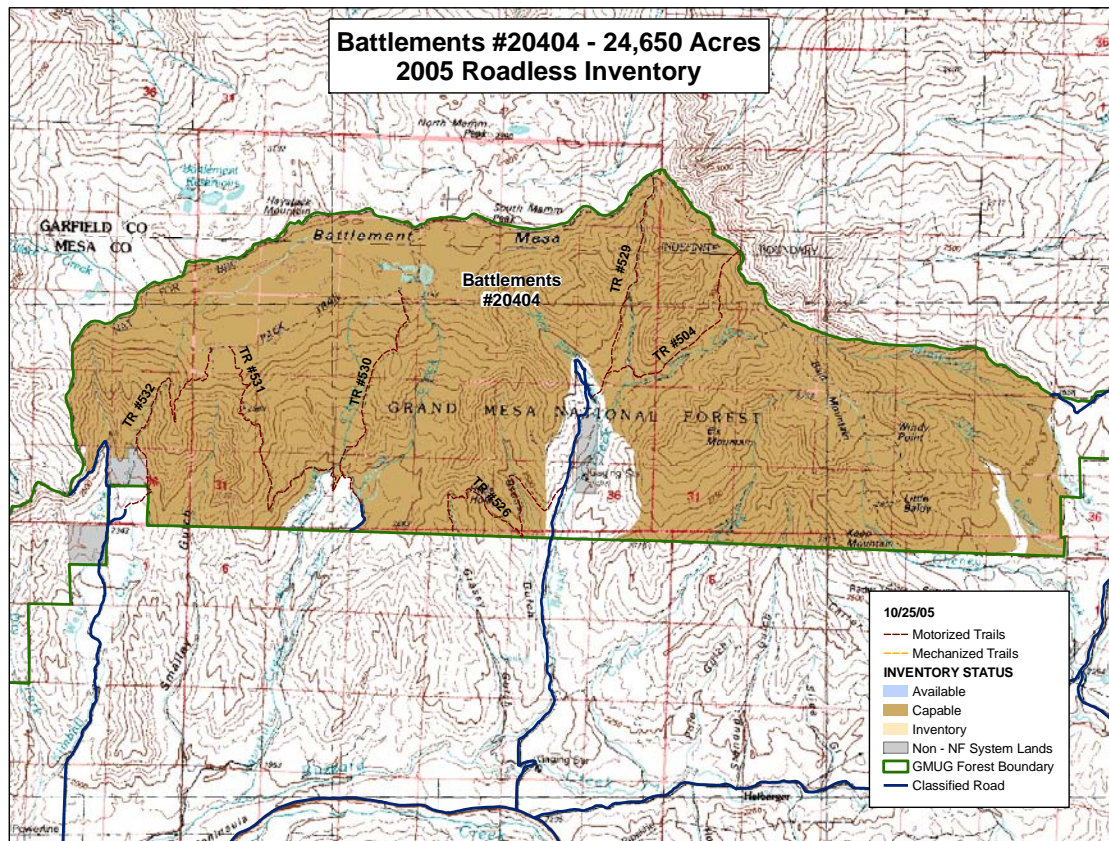
Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 40 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 40 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 40 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 45 miles

### **Battlements #20404 - 24,650 Acres – Mesa County**

**General Description:** The Battlement area is located adjacent to Plateau Creek Valley, in which the town of Collbran is located six miles to the south. The unit is bordered to the north by the White River National Forest, where the lands are managed as prescription 3.32, non-motorized recreation with winter motorized, and 5.43, elk habitat. The south is bounded by roaded and developed BLM and private lands.



Elevation Range – 7,600' – 11,000'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 26% aspen, 26% oak-serviceberry-shrub, 20% pinyon-juniper-oak, 12% spruce-fir-aspen, 9% bare ground, and 5% Douglas-fir.

Land Type –

10% 30IH – Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mid to lower mesa and mountain side slopes.

40% 50IH – Montane climate with deciduous forest that occurs at mid-elevations on gently sloping to moderately steep mountain, mesa, mesa flank, and hill slopes on slope wash from interbedded sandstones and shales.

50% 60IH – Montane and Subalpine climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shale geology on mountain slopes, hills, drainage side slopes, and ridges.

### Resource Activities:

#### Current & Ongoing:

- This area is within Hawxhurst, Brush Creek, and Cheney Creek cattle allotments. Some fences on these allotments are maintained using motorized vehicles.
- Several motorized trails are within the unit, #532, Kimball Creek; #530, Hawxhurst; #531, Smalley Mountain; #529, Brush Creek; #527, Battlement; and #504, East Brush Creek.
- Approximately 5% of this area has pending gas leases and approximately 40% of this area is currently leased. The area is covered with a No Surface Occupancy Stipulation.
- McCurry Reservoir and water transmission lines.
- Prescribed fire activities for fuels, big game habitat, and vegetative improvement.

### Wilderness Potential:

#### Capability:

##### Environment –

- Naturalness – Battlement Mesa has received extensive controlled burning to increase big game and livestock forage and decrease fuels loading. The burning has imitated natural processes but is the result of human intervention. McCurry Reservoir and numerous irrigation systems are located in this area. Natural processes have been modified.
- Solitude – The area is remote, however, it contains a motorized trail system. A sense of solitude can be experienced during the low use summer months, however, during fall big game season, the sense of solitude will be diminished.

Challenge – The area contains rugged terrain.

##### Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – The area is of sufficient size to manage for its roadless qualities.
- Boundaries – Boundaries are identifiable.

Special Features/Activities – The water transported from the area is of vital importance to the adjacent private land owners who rely on it for irrigation. It is also an area of known oil and gas potential, with the Debeque gas field lying to the west and numerous producing gas wells to the north along the Colorado River/I-70 corridor.

**Evaluation:** The area meets criteria for capability. The area is **capable** of wilderness.

Availability:

Recreation – Motorized trails exist within the area.

Water – Water is transported from the area and is vital to irrigation on adjacent private lands.

Timber – There are no lands suitable for wood fiber production within this unit.

Minerals – The area has a high potential for oil and gas and portions of the unit are currently under lease or have pending leases. NSO lease stipulation with some patches of CSU.

Management Considerations – Pre-existing mineral leases cover half of the area. Fuels management will be on-going to protect developments within the wildland urban interface will be needed.

**Evaluation** – The area is **not available** for wilderness due to pre-existing water rights and mineral rights. Extensive motorized trail system.

Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

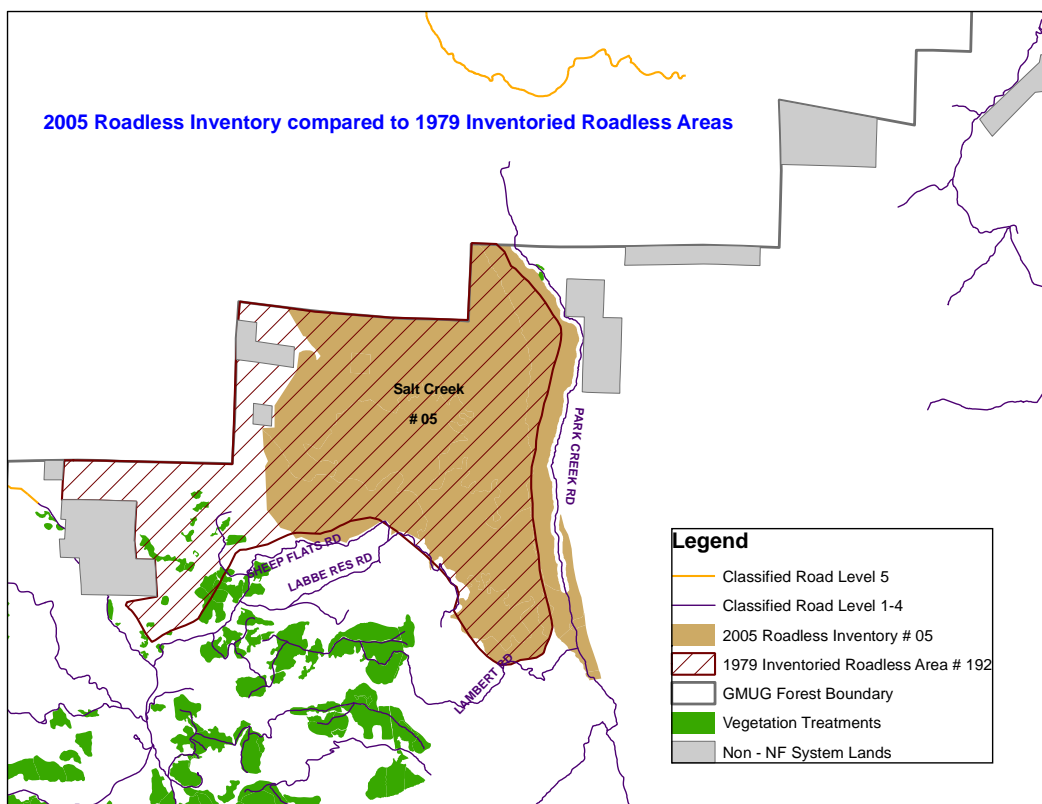
- Raggeds – 30 miles
- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 40 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 40 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 55 miles

## Rare II # 192 Salt Creek

**RARE II History** – RARE Unit 192 identified 10,880 acres as roadless yet did not recommend the area for wilderness in the RARE II FEIS. Lands altered by road construction, timber harvest and non-National Forest System lands were removed from the inventory. The remaining acreage is carried forward in the **2005 Inventory as #20405 Salt Creek.**

Resource Activities which removed lands of RARE 192 from 2005 inventory:

- There are three miles of road within IRA 192
- Vegetation harvest of 187 acres
- Non-National Forest System lands

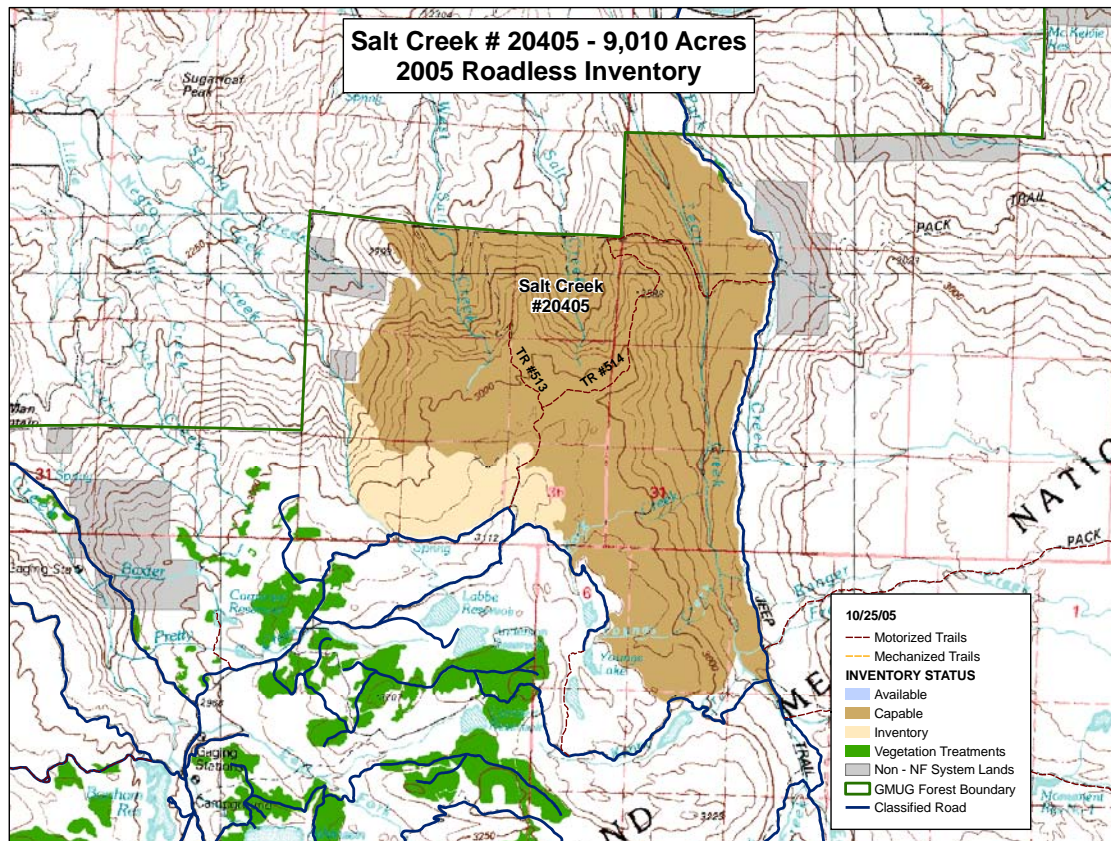




## 2005 Inventory Descriptions:

### ***Salt Creek #20405 – 9,010 Acres – Mesa County***

**General Description:** The area is located on the Grand Mesa just south of Vega Reservoir State Recreation Area, approximately seven miles southeast of Collbran. The unit is bounded on the north and west by BLM and private lands. The south boundary generally follows the Sheep Flats Road #279. The Park Creek Road #262, separates this unit from Flattops/Elk Park unit #20407.



Elevation Range – 8,000' – 10,300'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 5% spruce-fir, 58% spruce-fir aspen, 22% aspen, 9% willow-alder-grass, and 6% shrub-oak-serviceberry.

Land Type –

33% 50IH Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded shale and sandstone geology.

56% 60IH – Montane and Subalpine climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shale geology on mountain slopes, hills, drainage side slopes, and ridges.

**Resource Activities:**Current & Ongoing:

- This area is within the Leon and Big Creek cattle allotments.
- Two motorized trails #514, Salt Creek; and #513, West Salt Creek, are within this area.
- Approximately 75% of this area has pending oil and gas leases.
- The Anderson ditch is located in the southern area of this unit.
- Some maintenance of existing fences is accomplished using motorized vehicles.

**Wilderness Potential:**Capability:

## Environment –

- Naturalness – There are numerous non-system travelways within the area that have disrupted the natural integrity of meadows found in the remainder of the area. The Anderson Ditch extends from the Anderson Brothers reservoir and is paralleled by a maintenance road. The north face and the slope of Leon Creek appear natural.
- Solitude – The Park Creek Road #262 was improved by Exxon for access to a well near Monument Creek. That portion of the roadless area closest to this road has lost its remoteness. The north face of the area remains difficult to travel in, but its remoteness is limited due to most of the areas easy access by vehicle. Even through there are no routes managed for vehicle access, when dry, the area is accessible by two wheel drive and trespass into the area does occur.
- Motorized Trails #513 and #514 bisect the area.

Challenge – Only the steeper terrain near the north face of Leon Creek provides opportunities for challenge.

## Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – While portions of the area such as the north face and Leon Creek retain some roadless character, the majority of the area is not manageable as roadless.
- Boundaries – Adjusting the boundary to the Anderson Ditch would make a more enforceable boundary.

Special Features/Activities – None identified.

**Evaluation:** Adjusting for boundary management, approximately 8,000 acres (89%) are **capable** of wilderness.

Availability (of Capable Lands):

Recreation – There is a motorized trail system within the area.

Water – Water transmission lines and reservoirs are within the northern portion of the unit.

Timber – There are approximately 2,500 acres within the capable portion that are tentatively suitable for producing timber for wood fiber production. Another 600 acres of suitable timber land are within the inventory portion.

Minerals – The area has a high potential for oil and gas. There are existing and pending oil and gas leases. Most of the area is covered by NSO, but there is some CSU and Standard Lease Terms (southern section).

Management Considerations – Pre-existing rights for minerals and water uses.

**Evaluation** – The area offers high valued motorized recreation opportunities and, therefore, the area is **not available** for wilderness.

Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

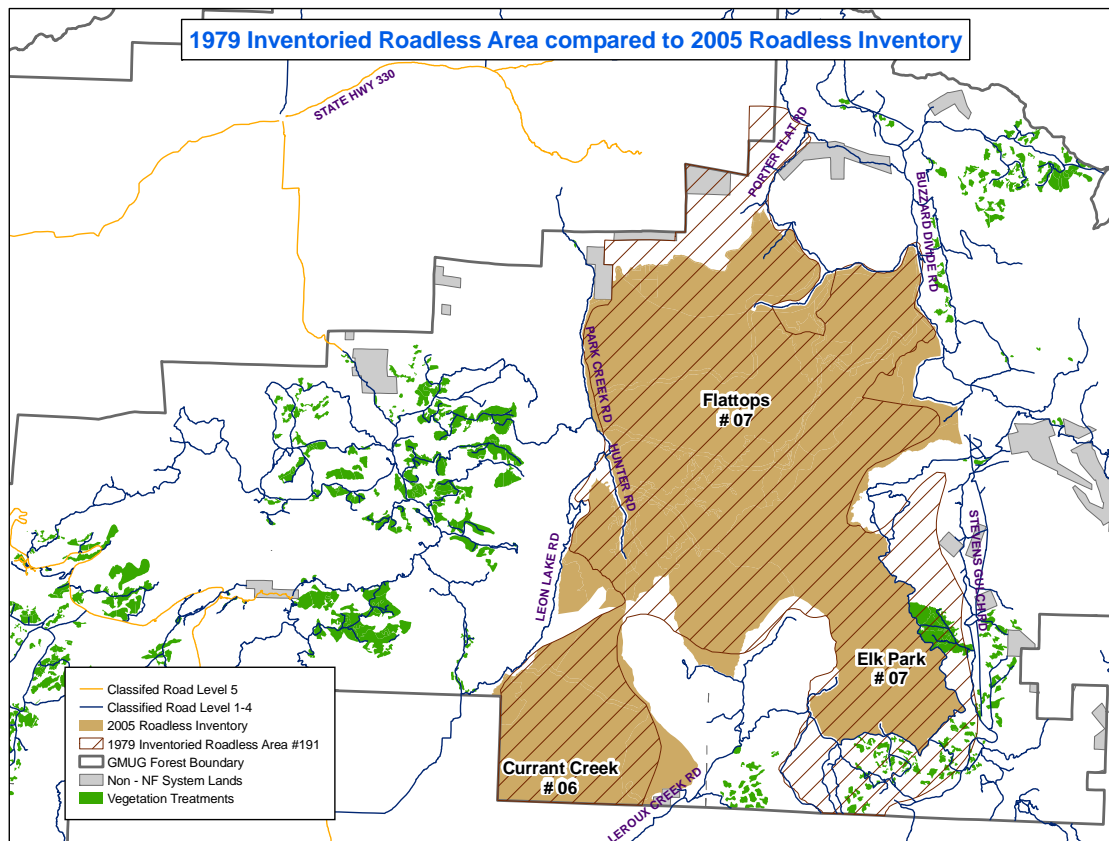
- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 30 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 30 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 30 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 60 miles

## Rare II # 191 Priest Mountain

**RARE II History** – RARE Unit 191 identified 102,580 acres as roadless yet did not recommend the area for wilderness in the RARE II FEIS. Lands altered from road construction, timber harvest, water developments, and water transmission lines were removed from the inventory. Non-National Forest System lands were also removed from the inventory. The remaining area is described in the **2005 inventory as #20406 Currant Creek and #20407 Flattops/Elk Park.**

Resource Activities which removed lands of RARE 191 from 2005 inventory:

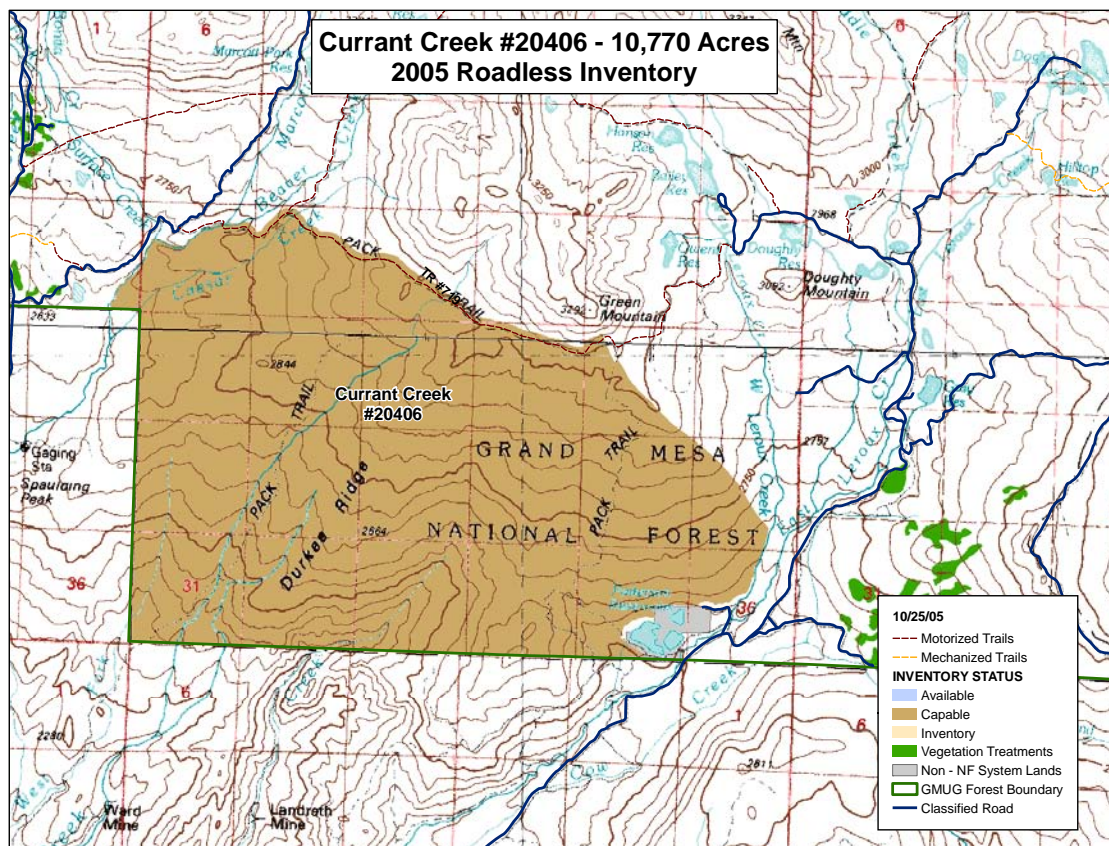
- There are 50 miles of road
- Vegetation harvest of 1,576 acres
- Water developments and transmission lines
- Non-National Forest System lands



## 2005 Inventory Descriptions:

### ***Currant Creek #20406 – 10,770 Acres – Mesa County***

**General Description:** Located within the Grand Mesa Geographic area approximately seven miles northeast of Cedaredge. The Currant Creek roadless area is bordered to the north by Beaver Creek and the Green Mountain Trail (#719) to Green Mountain where the boundary follows the topographic ridge to Leroux Creek. The unit follows the Forest boundary to the west and south. Adjacent to the Forest boundary is an intermix of BLM and private lands.



Elevation Range – 7,500' – 10,200'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern – Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 37% spruce-fir, 21% spruce-fir aspen, 17% aspen, 10% willow-alder-grass, 11% shrub-oak-serviceberry, and 2% bare ground.

Land Type –

55% 50IH – Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mountain, mesa, and hill slopes

40% 30IH – Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded sandstones and shales on mid to lower mesa and mountain side slopes.

**Resource Activities:**Current & Ongoing:

- This area is within the Green Mountain and Leroux Creek cattle allotments.
- One motorized trail #719, Green Mountain Trail, runs between the north boundary of this area and the south boundary of area #20407.
- One non-motorized trail #710, Currant Creek Trail, provides access into the unit from Green Mountain Trail.
- Approximately 10% of this area has existing oil and gas leases. Majority of area is designated No Lease for oil and gas.
- There is one commercial outfitter operation, including two authorized camps, within the area.

**Wilderness Potential:**Capability:

## Environment –

- Naturalness – Natural processes are in place and continuing. There is little evidence of human induced change. The area appears natural.
- Solitude – The area is bordered on the south by the National Forest boundary with private land. There is no public access across this private land. The difficulty of access makes this area remote.

Challenge – The lower third of the area includes steep oak brush canyons. Cross country travel is difficult. The limited access offers opportunities for challenge and self reliance.

## Manageability/Boundaries –

- Size – The area is of sufficient size to be managed in its present condition.
- Boundaries – Boundaries are identifiable and manageable.

Special Features/Activities – The Colorado Division of Wildlife considers this area important wildlife habitat. Its location on the south side of the Grand Mesa makes its wildlife value more important.

**Evaluation:** The area meets the criteria for capability and is considered to be **capable** of wilderness.

Availability:

Recreation – The Green Mountain motorized trail is along the northern boundary of the unit.

Timber – There are approximately 4,800 acres of land that are tentatively suitable for producing timber for wood fiber production within this unit.

Water – The area has reservoirs and ditches, most notably the Pattersons and Carl Smith Reservoirs.

Minerals – The area has a high potential for oil and gas. An approved lease exists within the area. The area is predominantly No Lease; however, standard

lease terms apply to the area just south of the Green Mountain Trail, in the area of the existing lease. There are also small patches of CSU.

Management Considerations – Pre-existing rights for mineral leasing and water cover the area. The unit is within a wildland urban interface.

**Evaluation** – The area is **not available** for wilderness because of pre-existing mineral and water rights associated with the unit.

Need:

Nearby Wilderness – approximate distance away:

- Gunnison Gorge Wilderness – 15 miles
- West Elk Wilderness – 25 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 25 miles
- Roubideau Area – 40 miles
- Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness – 60 miles

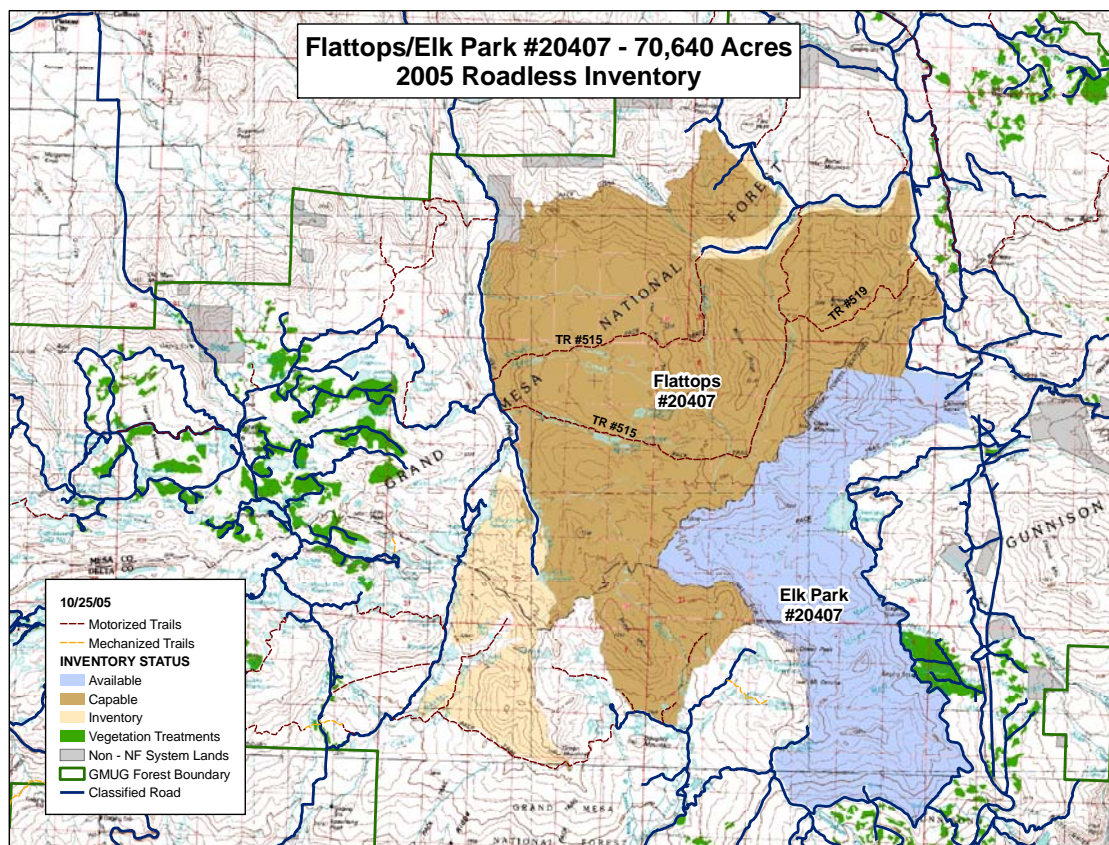
## 2005 Inventory Descriptions:

### ***Flattops / Elk Park #20407 – 70,640 Acres – Mesa & Delta Counties***

**General Description:** The area is located approximately 10 miles north of Paonia. The area is bounded to the west by the Park Creek Road #262 and the Buzzard Divide Road #265 and the Overland Ditch to the east. There are two distinct segments the Flattops and Elk Park, which are separated by the watershed divide which separates Mesa and Delta Counties.

Flattops – Located within Mesa County from the divide to Park Creek Road #262

Elk Park - Located within Delta County from the divide to the Overland Ditch. This segment is located within both the Grand Mesa National Forest (western most portion) and the Gunnison National Forest (eastern portion).



Elevation Range – 7,500' – 11,300'

Eco-Section – M33IH – Northern-Central Highlands and Rocky Mountain

Vegetation – The Potential Natural Vegetation is predominately 37% spruce-fir, 21% spruce-fir-aspen, 17% aspen, 11% shrub, 6% riparian, and 4% grass.

Land Type

37% 60IH – Montane climate zone; interbedded shale and sandstone geology.



33% 70BS02 – Subalpine climate zone; basalt geologic material.

19% 50IH – Lower Montane climate zone; interbedded shale and sandstone geology.

### **Resource Activities:**

#### Current & Ongoing –Flattops Segment:

- The area is within the Leon, Buzzard, and Dyke cattle allotments.
- There are popular motorized ATV trails within the unit:
  - High Trail #515
  - Monument Trail #518
  - Buzzard Park Trail #519
  - East Leon Trail #730
- Several water developments are within the unit. Of note are Monument Reservoirs #1 and #2 located in the center of the Flattop segment.
- The area is covered by a No Lease stipulation for oil and gas.

#### Current & Ongoing –Elk Park Segment:

- The area is within the West Muddy and West Terror cattle allotments.
- Motorized trails Elk Park Trail #800 and East Leon Trail #730 are within the area.
- The area is currently available for oil and gas leasing; a portion of one existing lease overlaps in the extreme southeast corner of this unit. Much of the area is covered by a No Lease stipulation; however, the southern portion of this segment is covered by a Controlled Surface Use stipulation.
- The Overland ditch makes the southern and eastern boundary of this segment.

### **Wilderness Potential:**

#### Capability:

##### Environment –

- Naturalness – The southwest portion of the Flattop segment is heavily influenced by water developments. Away from these developments and boundary roads, the area retains a high level of naturalness.
- Solitude – The motorized trails within the Flattop segment influence the sense of solitude and remoteness. The relatively open vegetation and flat terrain cannot screen the motorized activities, thus solitude is affected. The Elk Park segment, however, retains a very high sense of remoteness.

Challenge – The Flattop segment offers a moderate degree of challenge. The open vegetation and flat terrain of the Flattops does not provide the same sense of adventure and self-reliance as does the Elk Park segment. The dense vegetation and limited trails within the Elk Park segment provides a high degree of adventure and self-reliance.

### Manageability/Boundaries –

- **Size/Shape** – The area is large and could be managed for roadless qualities. The area within the Flattop segment near Leon Lake has an odd boundary and shape that would be difficult to identify and manage.
- **Boundaries** – The boundary within the extreme southeast corner would require adjustment to eliminate the area encumbered by the existing oil and gas lease. Boundaries along the southwest portion of the Flattop segments in the vicinity of Leon Lake Road #127 would be difficult to manage. The boundary skirts several reservoirs and access roads making an unusual shape and unmanageable boundary. The remainder of the boundary follows roads and terrain features.

**Special Features/Activities** – The Overland Ditch along the eastern boundary.

**Evaluation:** The majority of the area meets criteria for capability. However, the portion near Leon Lake does not meet capability requirements for manageability due to the unusual shape that avoids reservoirs and other water developments. In total, approximately 63,370 acres or 90% of the area is **capable** of wilderness.

### Availability (of Capable Lands):

**Recreation** – A motorized trail system exists within the Flattops segment of this unit.

**Water** – Several water developments, including those for municipal use, are located within the unit. Some are located within the middle of the unit.

**Timber** – There are approximately 30,300 acres within the capable portion of the unit that are tentatively suitable for wood fiber production. Another 1,300 acres of tentatively suitable timber land is within the inventory portion of the unit.

**Minerals** – The area has a high potential for oil and gas. The Flattop segment has a No Lease stipulation; however, the Elk Park segment has a Controlled Surface Use stipulation. There is currently only a small area in the extreme southeast corner of the unit encumbered with an existing lease.

**Management Considerations** – A portion of the Elk Park segment is available for lease with a Controlled Surface Use stipulation.

**Management Considerations** – The Elk Park segment is available for lease.

**Evaluation** – The Elk Park segment of this unit that is located on the Gunnison National Forest is **available** for wilderness. The Grand Mesa National Forest portion of the Elk Park segment is **not available** due to water developments. The Flattop segment of this unit is **not available** for wilderness due to the highly valued motorized recreation trail system within the area.

### Need:

**Nearby Wilderness** – approximate distance away:

- West Elk Wilderness –20 miles
- Raggeds Wilderness – 20 miles

- Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness – 25 miles
- Black Canyon of Gunnison Wilderness – 30 miles
- Roubideau Area – 45 miles
- Flattop Wilderness – 45 miles
- Collegiate Peaks Wilderness – 50 miles
- Uncompahgre Wilderness – 60 miles
- Holy Cross Wilderness – 60 miles
- Powderhorn Wilderness – 65 miles