

Notom Bench

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
5,500	1,500	7,000 (67%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
3,500	0	3,500 (33%)
Inventory Unit Total		
9,000	1,500	10,500
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Capitol Reef National Park—		35,010
Capitol Gorge Unit		

Most of the Notom Bench inventory unit (7,000 acres) has retained its natural character; this portion is roadless and only lightly impacted. However, several portions (3,500 acres) were found not to be natural, notably near Oak Creek and Pleasant Creek. The unit is contiguous to Capitol Reef National Park's Capitol Gorge area (35,010 acres), which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. The unit has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and solitude, especially when considered in conjunction with contiguous National Park Service (NPS) lands.

Unit Description

The Notom Bench inventory unit straddles the boundary between Wayne and Garfield Counties, about six miles south of Utah Highway 24 and west of the Notom Road. The nearest settlement is Caineville, about 12 miles northwest. Capitol Reef National Park forms the western boundary. Its northern and south-

ern borders are formed by private lands, while the east side follows a maintained road and/or power line.

Topography consists primarily of rolling foothills forming the eastern slope of the Waterpocket Fold. Vegetation ranges from scattered juniper trees on the upper slopes to desert shrubs such as blackbrush, rabbitbrush, and Mormon tea on the lower benchlands. Cottonwoods are found in the washes along Burro, Sheets, Cottonwood, and Fivemile Creeks. The unit is bisected from east to west by several of these major drainages. The deeply incised notch canyons are used to access popular hiking areas in Cottonwood, Burro, Sheets Gulch, and Fivemile Creeks within NPS lands. There is evidence of off-highway vehicle play in Cottonwood Creek and the benchlands adjacent to the Notom Road.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

About 7,000 acres of the Notom Bench inventory unit retain their natural character. This portion remains roadless, even though several ways are found that were probably used for mineral exploration. A small pasture fence and approximately 0.75 mile of old seismic lines are also present. Dispersed primitive campsites and parking areas are located on the major drainages along the Notom Road. Portions of the unit show evidence of off-highway vehicle use, principally near Cottonwood Wash and near the Sandy Ranches. However, these various human imprints are not noticeable within the unit as a whole.

Two areas (3,500 acres) that have been noticeably disturbed and lack naturalness include an area west of Pleasant Creek, where there is a maintained road and an irrigation ditch, and the southern portion of the unit, where a road leads to a trailhead and primitive campsite north of Oak Creek.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit is contiguous to Capitol Reef National Park's Capitol Gorge area, which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. The inventory unit has outstanding opportunities for solitude when considered in conjunction with the NPS area. The Notom Bench inventory unit also has outstanding opportunities for solitude on its own, especially along the washes that screen open badlands.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The unit is contiguous to Capitol Reef National Park's Capitol Gorge area, which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. In combination with these NPS lands, the Notom Bench unit has outstanding opportunities for at least one form of primitive and unconfined recreation—hiking takes place in the drainages and deeply incised canyons to access popular NPS areas.

Supplemental Values

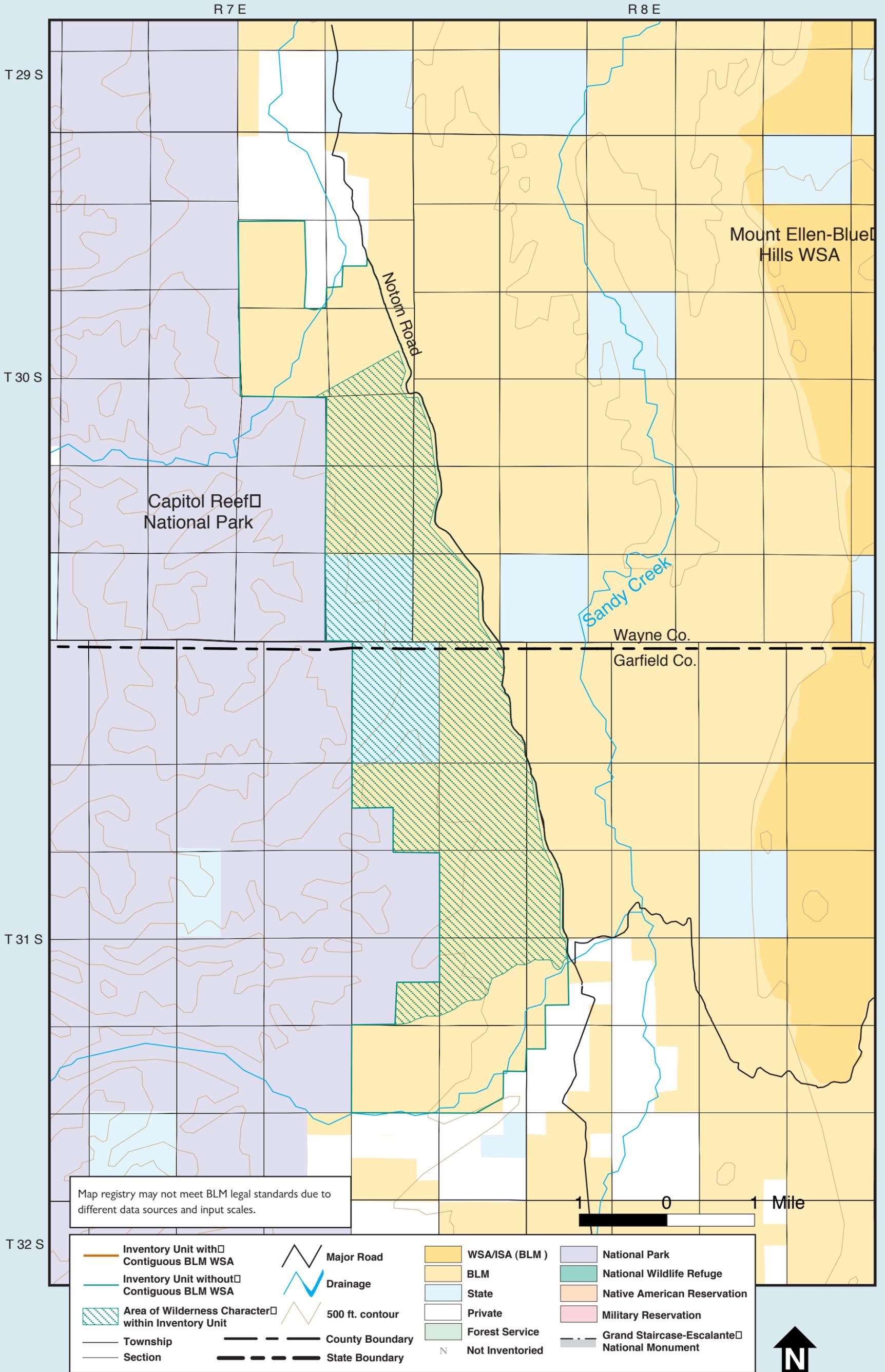
No supplemental values have been identified.

NOTOM BENCH—Evidence of off-highway vehicle use in the Cottonwood Wash area within the unit; a portion of the Waterpocket Fold within adjacent Capitol Reef National Park is visible in the background.



Jerry Sintz

Notom Bench



EAST CENTRAL REGION—Notom Bench