

Cedar Mountain

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
15,100	2,200	17,300 (99%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
200	10	210 (1%)
Inventory Unit Total		
15,300	2,210	17,510
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

Approximately 17,300 acres of the Cedar Mountain inventory unit have wilderness characteristics, while 210 acres do not. Most of the unit retains its natural character, which is enhanced by the dominating presence of Cedar Mountain. Minor intrusions are noticeable along the fringes of the unit in several locations. However, these human disturbances are limited to faint evidence of seismographic lines and short four-wheel drive ways associated with two reservoirs and stock-watering facilities in the Mussentuchit Flat area. Most of the unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, particularly in the rugged terrain radiating from Cedar Mountain. Three parcels do not have wilderness characteristics because of a combination of developments, including a bladed road, vehicle trails, and range developments.

Unit Description

The Cedar Mountain inventory unit is located in the extreme southwestern corner of Emery County, approximately 10 miles south of Interstate 70. Two Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)—the Muddy Creek WSA and the Crack Canyon WSA—are to the east. The unit is bounded on all sides by county-maintained roads.

Land ownership consists primarily of public land. Topography varies greatly, from the massive structure of Cedar Mountain with its rise of more than a thousand feet above nearby Muddy Creek and the Mussentuchit badlands, to the relatively flat and rolling landscape characteristic of the Mussentuchit Flat area. The rugged slopes radiating down from Cedar Mountain's summit make access into the area difficult.

The unit is sparsely vegetated, with desert shrubs and grasses predominating in the relatively flat-to-rolling-hill landscape of the Mussentuchit Flat area, and scattered junipers and occasional piñon pines

dotting the badlands and upper reaches of Cedar Mountain. Tamarisk and occasional cottonwood trees are found along wash bottoms and adjacent to several constructed reservoirs near the boundary roads.

Wild horses are known to range over much of the unit, particularly in the vicinity of Mussentuchit Flat. The eastern portion is yearlong desert bighorn sheep habitat; it is not unusual for people to see sheep in the vicinity of Cedar Mountain.

Primary uses of the land include livestock grazing and recreation. Panoramic 360-degree views of the southwestern part of the San Rafael Swell, in conjunction with the area's recognized geological importance (dike and sill igneous intrusions), combine to make the Cedar Mountain inventory unit unique among the Swell's many significant recreational areas.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Overall, the unit largely retains its natural character. Several faint seismographic lines, along with a few fences and several short access ways leading to livestock watering facilities, show up on recent aerial photographs. However, without exception, the seismographic lines were found to be faint, except where they have been maintained by livestock passage in scattered locations. Otherwise, the seismographic lines are returning to a natural appearance. The few fences present remain substantially unnoticeable in the landscape.

A few areas do not appear to be natural. Two are along the western boundary road in Mussentuchit Flat. The combination of off-highway vehicle disturbance, short access ways, and the small reservoirs, troughs, and fences to which they lead has created an unnatural setting. Another area consists of a bladed road and small sliver of land along the eastern boundary road.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The unit provides outstanding opportunities

for solitude, particularly in the rugged topography of Cedar Mountain and the badlands to the peak's south and west. Even the landscape encompassing the interior portions of Mussentuchit Flat accords opportunities for solitude given the distance from roads and low probability of visitor encounters at any time of the year. Boundary roads and the passage of vehicles are difficult to detect when in the heart of the Mussentuchit Flat area. Even though relatively flat terrain exists throughout much of the Mussentuchit Flat area, outstanding opportunities for solitude can be experienced.

CEGAR MOUNTAIN—In addition to the required wilderness values, the unit is valuable as a geologic-type site and as a classic field example for scientific and educational study.

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Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for participation in dispersed, undeveloped recreation activities are outstanding within the vicinity of Cedar Mountain itself and in the badlands extending to its south and southwest. Cedar Mountain's summit provides visitors a 360-degree panoramic view of the southwestern part of the San Rafael Swell. Outstanding opportunities exist for hiking, sightseeing, and photography. Because Cedar Mountain stands as the centerpiece of a geologically unique region of the San Rafael Swell (through its classic examples of exposed dike and sill igneous intrusions), outstanding opportunities exist for environmental education and the study of geology and landforms. These same attributes, however, do not extend into the more gentle topography characteristic of much of the Mussentuchit Flat area.

Supplemental Values

The unit has exceptional value for recreational sightseeing because of the exposure of igneous dikes and sills resulting from the area's volcanic activity. Of equal importance is its value as a geologic type site and as a classic field example for scientific/educational geologic study. The unit also exhibits evidence of wild horse use and was visited and used by early Native Americans, most notably in much of the Mussentuchit Flat area.



BLM photo

Cedar Mountain

