

Mexican Mountain

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
36,700	10,200	46,900 (63%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
11,700	16,200	27,900 (37%)
Inventory Unit Total		
48,400	26,400	74,800
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Mexican Mountain WSA (UT-060-054)		59,600

Most of the six Mexican Mountain inventory units (46,900 acres) retain their wilderness characteristics. However, about 27,900 acres of the inventory units lack wilderness characteristics because of substantially noticeable disturbance, primarily from off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The units are contiguous to the Mexican Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). In combination with this WSA, the inventory units have outstanding solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities.

Unit Description

The units lie in Emery County north of Interstate 70 about 15 miles west of Green River. The six units represent widely varied topographic settings that, when combined with the dramatic canyons of the Mexican Mountain WSA, create a truly impressive area within the spectacular San Rafael Swell. Sheer canyon walls in the northern portion (Calf Canyon, Cow Canyon, and the Devils Hole country) rise over 1,000 feet above the benchlands. Part of the upper Black Box, which is a popular destination point for many hardy kayakers, hikers, and floaters, is in the contiguous WSA. Above the dramatic canyons, rolling benchlands typified by Horse Heaven are cut by numerous drainages and heavily vegetated with piñon and juniper. Within Unit 3, Limestone Bench transitions into more rugged canyons, low buttes, and ridges to the east and south. Unit 4 includes Jackass Benches west of Black Dragon Wash, along with rugged benchlands above the spectacular Black Box sections of the San Rafael River canyon.

The upland vegetation is dominated by piñon and juniper woodland, while the lower elevations include desert shrub land intermingled with grasses. The riparian zones along the San Rafael River and other prominent streams includes greasewood, willows, tamarisk, and cottonwoods.

Primary uses of the units include recreation and livestock grazing. Many of the roads and ways within or adjacent to the unit provide recreational access to the San Rafael River, the Black Box, and other canyons. The area is popular for OHV use, hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, and horseback riding, as well as for kayaking and tubing the river.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the units retain their natural character. The six units are scattered around the WSA boundary and contain substantial acreage with few intrusions, except for specific areas of high OHV-related recreational use. Most intrusions consist of vehicle ways, often extending from cherry-stemmed roads to sites of particular recreational interest. Some range developments, consisting mostly of stock ponds and drift fences, are scattered through the units but are substantially unnoticeable.

There are two cherry-stemmed roads in Unit 1 that extend up Pine and Calf Canyons off the Buckhorn Wash Road. A number of vehicle ways and OHV play areas have particularly impacted the central portion of the unit northwest of Devils Hole and east of Prickly Pear Flat. As a result of these cumulative impacts, this area lacks natural character. One additional area on the benchlands north of Cow Canyon has an accumulation of vehicle ways, campsites, and OHV intrusions, and also lacks natural character. Most of Unit 2 is unnatural because of the cumulative impacts from multiple vehicle ways. Remnants of oil and gas drill holes are also evident. Unit 3 is natural in character. The only intrusions include several vehicle ways and stock ponds, but these are substantially unnoticeable. Two roads have been cherry-stemmed out of Unit 3.

Unit 4 is natural in character. Three roads that provide access to various points along the Black Box segment of the San Rafael River have been cherry-stemmed from the unit. The southern portion of Unit 5 lacks natural character because of the presence of multiple vehicle ways and other OHV intrusions. The Pack Saddle Gulch Road has been cherry-stemmed from Unit 6. A portion of this unit lacks wilderness characteristics because of cumulative impacts of two vehicle ways, range developments, and a lack of topographic and vegetative screening.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

The units are contiguous to and are an extension of the Mexican Mountain WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for solitude. In combination with this WSA, the units also contain outstanding opportunities for solitude. Of particular significance is Horse Heaven, the eastern extension of Limestone Bench, and the rugged confines of Cow and Calf Canyons.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The units are contiguous to and are an extension of the Mexican Mountain WSA, which has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Both on their own and in combination with this WSA, the units have numerous outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Of particular interest are the canyons that connect to the Black Box, a popular hiking area. In addition, Cow, Calf, and Pine Canyons are spectacular areas with outstanding hiking and sightseeing opportunities. Opportunities are enhanced because these canyons offer exceptional scenic vistas within the confines of a deep, steep-walled canyon complex. Side canyons offer additional interest and variety. Calf Canyon allows hikers to travel from the broad open canyon floors to the mesa tops.

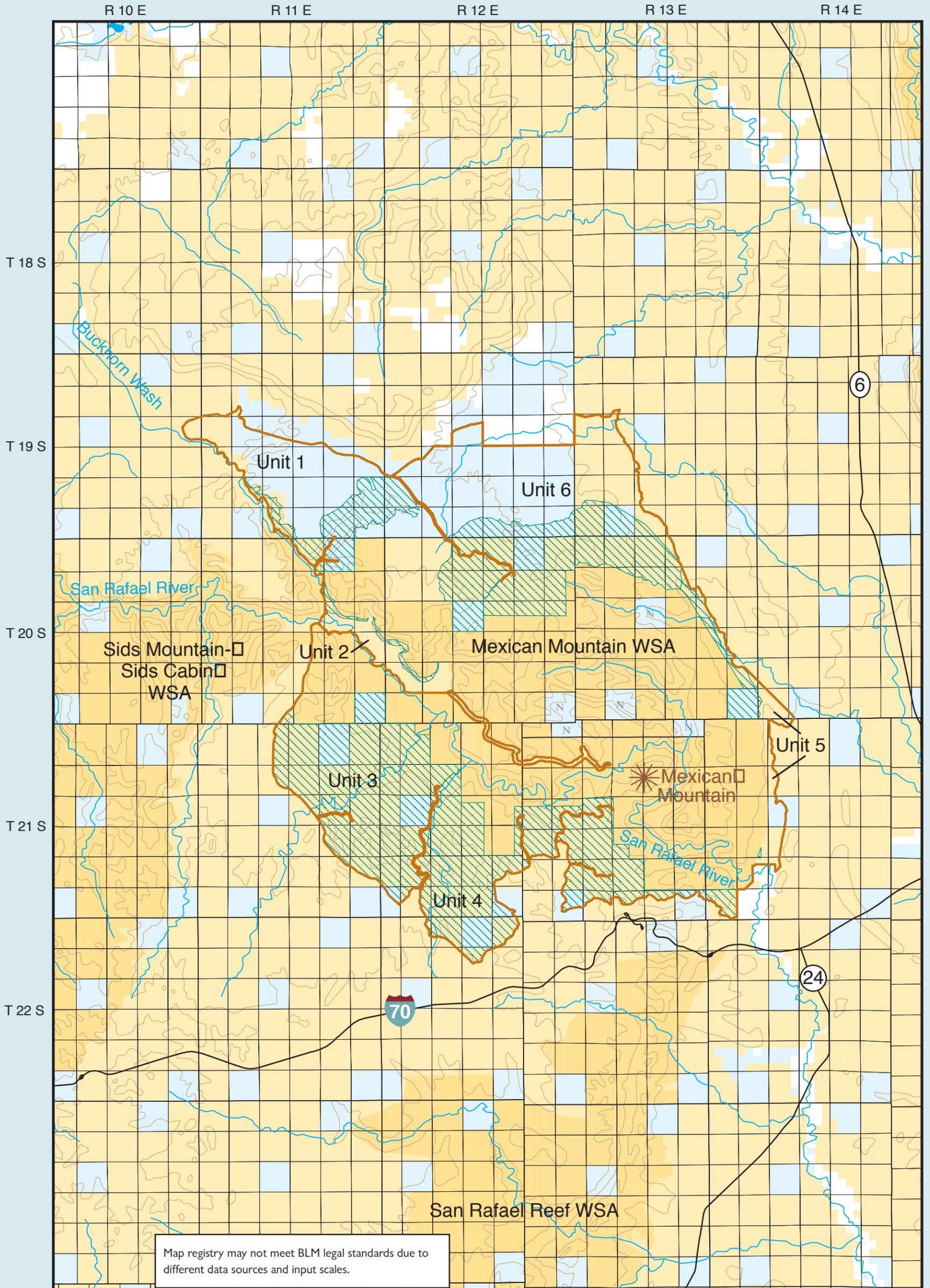
Supplemental Values

The units contain significant archaeological and historic resources. The old Spanish Trail runs through the northern portion of the inventory area, and archaeological sites are scattered through the units. A nineteenth century railroad grade borders the northeast part of the units. An impressive pictograph panel found along Black Dragon Wash is a popular destination point for sightseers.

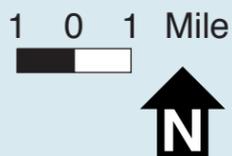
The units contain important habitat for desert bighorn sheep, and the spectacular cliffs within the unit provide good nesting areas for peregrine falcons. Several threatened or endangered plant species also inhabit the area. Most visitors are awed by the dramatic examples of the geologic stratification and uplifting that occurs along the San Rafael Swell. In addition to the impressive canyon and other diverse topographic features, the area is rich in rockhounding opportunities, given the presence of geodes, petrified wood, and other mineral specimens.

A photograph of Mexican Mountain is shown in the front part of this document on page vi.

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Map registry may not meet BLM legal standards due to different data sources and input scales.



Inventory Unit with Contiguous BLM WSA	Major Road	WSA/ISA (BLM)	National Park
Inventory Unit without Contiguous BLM WSA	Drainage	BLM	National Wildlife Refuge
Area of Wilderness Character within Inventory Unit	500 ft. contour	State	Native American Reservation
Township	County Boundary	Private	Military Reservation
Section	State Boundary	Forest Service	Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
		Not Inventoried	