

Deep Creek Mountains

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
22,800	11,320	34,120 (93%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
2,600	0	2,600 (7%)
Inventory Unit Total		
25,400	11,320	36,720
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
Deep Creek Mountains WSA (UT-020-060)		68,910
Scott's Basin WSA (UT-050-020A)		6,990

About 34,120 acres of the eleven Deep Creek Mountains inventory units have wilderness characteristics. Most of the area is in a natural condition with little or no evidence of human presence. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are outstanding because of topographic and vegetative screening. However, 2,600 acres in parts of Units 2, 8, and 11 do not possess wilderness characteristics because of impacts from roads, vehicle ways, and mining activities. Supplemental features that enhance the area's wilderness characteristics include scenic, scientific, ecological, educational, and historical values. The units are contiguous to the Deep Creek Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Unit Description

The Deep Creek Mountains inventory units are located in Tooele and Juab Counties, near the Nevada border, approximately 140 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Rising over 8,000 feet above the valley floor to an elevation of 12,101 feet, the Deep Creek Range forms an "island ecosystem" in the Great Salt Lake Desert. Vegetation ranges from salt desert shrub to alpine tundra. The Deep Creek Mountains are also the only mountain range in the Great Basin with an abundance of water. Six live streams on the eastern slopes support fish, including a pure strain of cutthroat trout in two of the streams. A large block of state land is found at the south end

in Unit 11; individual state parcels are scattered throughout other units.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Most of the Deep Creek Mountains inventory units retain their natural character. Intrusions that detract from the units' natural character are generally associated with mineral exploration in the southeastern portion and with roads and vehicle ways in the northern portion. Several vehicle ways identified during the BLM's previous wilderness inventory have not been used for many years, have been naturally reclaimed, and are substantially unnoticeable at this time.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding throughout the inventory units when they are considered in conjunction with the contiguous WSA. The size and configuration of the units are important factors in achieving solitude. The best opportunities are in the higher, more remote locations, where rugged topography, rock outcrops, and dense vegetation canopies dominate the canyon valleys and steep walls.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory units' deep canyons, rocky ridges, sheer cliffs, and rolling hills offer

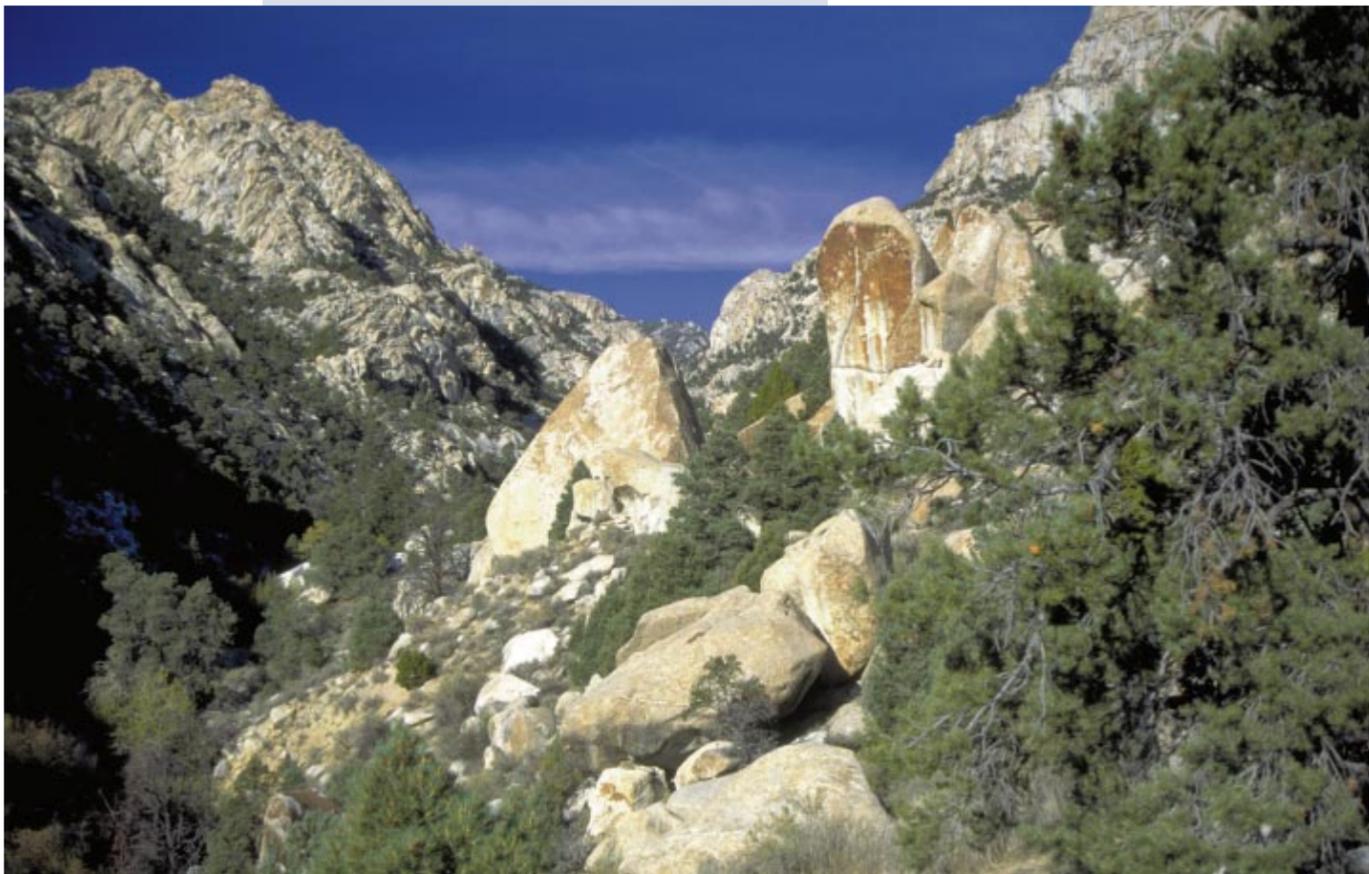
challenging and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation activities, including hunting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, and sightseeing. The scenery is beautiful.

Supplemental Values

Supplemental values that enhance the wilderness characteristics of the Deep Creek Mountains inventory units include scenic, scientific, ecological, educational, and historical values. The Snake Valley cutthroat trout, the rare giant stonefly, grapefern, and stands of bristlecone pine are all of scientific interest. The Deep Creek Mountains have been called an "island ecosystem" isolated within the Great Salt Lake Desert. Their enormous vertical relief has created an ecological condition that fosters a biological diversity unmatched in Utah's desert mountains. Eight perennial streams flow from within the Deep Creek Mountains. The Bonneville cutthroat trout, an endangered species, occurs only within a couple of streams in the Deep Creek Mountains. Elk, deer, mountain lion, antelope, and numerous other animal species inhabit the area. About 185 species of birds, including the endangered bald eagle and peregrine falcon and a rare variety of blue grouse, live or migrate through the Deep Creek Mountains. Sixty plant families, including 431 species, are found here.

Numerous archaeological sites have been identified within the inventory units, representing the Archaic, Seiver, and Piute-Shoshoni cultures. Scenic values include steep-walled granite canyons, tumbling mountain streams, and snow-capped peaks.

DEEP CREEK MOUNTAINS—The canyon of Red Cedar Creek is one of many within this Great Salt Lake Desert "island ecosystem," which offers outstanding wilderness opportunities and supports a biological diversity unmatched in Utah's other desert mountains.



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