

# Horse Spring Canyon

## Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
<b>With Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
28,300	3,500	31,800 (91%)
<b>Without Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
3,100	0	3,100 (9%)
<b>Inventory Unit Total</b>		
31,400	3,500	34,900
<b>Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics</b>		
None		

About 31,800 acres of the Horse Spring Canyon inventory unit have wilderness characteristics, while 3,100 acres do not. The area with wilderness characteristics is natural and roadless, with slight evidence of human activity. Most human intrusions are located near the boundaries; much of the unit's interior is pristine. More than 80 miles of incised and forested canyons, paired with densely wooded benches and mesas, result in outstanding opportunities for solitude throughout. Opportunities for primitive recreation are equally outstanding. Canyons, creeks, and their tributaries chisel through mountainous countryside. These canyons present the hiker, backpacker, hunter, and equestrian with complexity, choice, and unconfined opportunities to explore a natural landscape, study archaeological resources, see Horizon Arch, or climb to forested overlooks.

Three areas lack wilderness characteristics because of the cumulative effect of roads, vehicle ways, off-highway vehicle (OHV) and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) play areas, a borrow pit, corrals, a power line, trash dumping, wood cutting, grazing developments, and a water pipeline. Nine roads and one vehicle way have been cherry-stemmed from the inventory unit.

## Unit Description

The Horse Spring Canyon inventory unit is located in Garfield County two miles southwest of the town of Escalante. Situated within the BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the unit lies on the extreme north end of the Kaiparowits Plateau. Mitchell Canyon, Willow Creek, Coal Bed Canyon and Horse Spring Canyon, all moderately deep canyons cut southwest to northeast, wind through the unit. Vegetation consists of piñon, juniper, and ponderosa woodlands, along with understory shrubs and sage.

Grazing management facilities are distributed around the unit, mostly along the boundary, and there is some minor evidence of coal prospecting. Oil exploration and production sites are present in the Upper Valley oil field to the west and southwest. Woodcutting, OHV and ATV driving, hunting, camping, and target shooting occur along the northeastern side close to the town of Escalante. Recreation use on the remainder of the unit is light.

## Wilderness Characteristics

### Naturalness

Most of the inventory unit retains its natural character. A number of intrusions have been chronicled, but any of consequence are located on the unit's boundary. There are almost no human intrusions within the interior of the unit. Unitwide documented intrusions include 21 vehicle ways, seven range fences, a corral, four stock ponds/reservoirs, portions of a water pipeline and affiliated drinkers, woodcutting sites, dispersed camping and "party" areas, trash dumps, a gravel pit, OHV and ATV play areas, some coal prospects, three oil and gas drill pads, and a chaining and seeding project. Three areas on the northeast, southeast, and southwest sides of the unit

were determined to be unnatural because of the cumulative effects of these human activities.

The portion of the unit considered natural in appearance has a few substantially unnoticeable imprints. The principal human imprints include 13 vehicle ways and some 1.2 miles of fence line. With the exception of the Mitchell Canyon and Coal Bed Canyon vehicle ways, all imprints are near the unit's border.

## Outstanding Opportunities

### Solitude

The entire unit provides outstanding solitude, with ample opportunities to avoid the sights, sounds, evidence, or presence of others in the area. About 49 square miles of rugged landscape, broken by miles of extensive canyons and their tributaries, provide visitors with scores of secluded locations and travel routes. Dense piñon, juniper, and ponderosa woodlands, with thick brush and sage understory, ensure visual separation between visitors and uninterrupted opportunities for outstanding solitude throughout the unit.

### Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, including day hiking, overnight backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, and archaeological and geologic sightseeing. These opportunities are outstanding because of their quality, challenge, complexity, and variety. Mitchell, Coal Bed, and Horse Spring Canyons; Willow and Canaan Creeks; and their associated tributaries cut through a torturous mountain landscape, offering the hiker, backpacker, hunter, and equestrian more than 80 miles of potential canyon and wash travel routes. There are many opportunities for the knowledgeable backcountry traveler to study Kaiparowits Plateau geology or contemplate the cultural remnants of Native American peoples.

## Supplemental Values

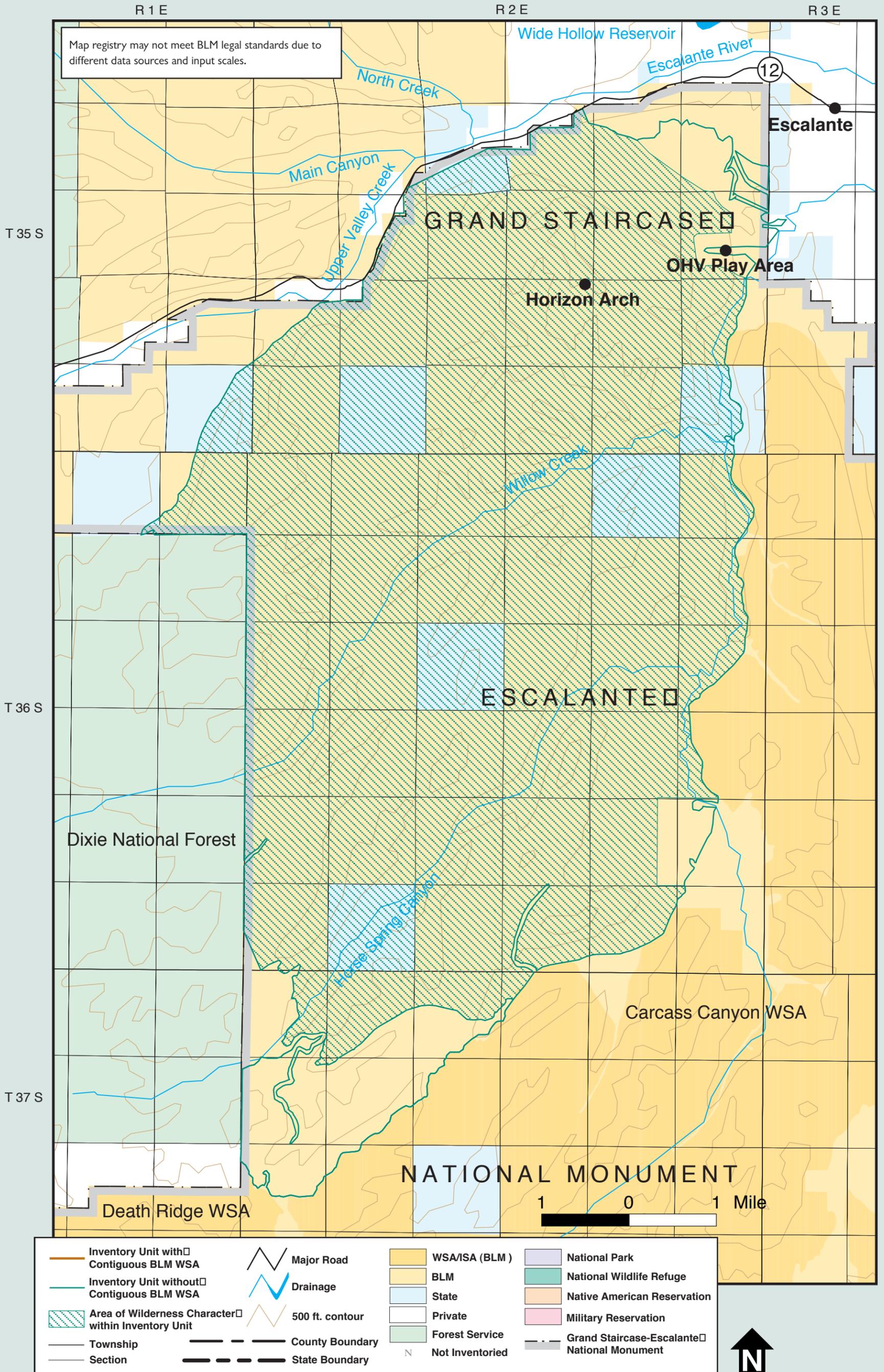
Geological features include Horizon Arch, petrified wood, and fossils. Archaeological features include petroglyphs, pictographs, granaries, cave habitation sites, and open camping areas.

**HORSE SPRING CANYON—**  
Nearly 80 miles of extensive canyons and their tributaries and 49 square miles of rugged terrain offer the hiker, backpacker, hunter, and equestrian nearly endless opportunities and experiences.



Jerry Sintz

# Horse Spring Canyon



SOUTH CENTRAL REGION—Horse Spring Canyon