

Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal

Bull Gulch

Bull Gulch is a lovely area, and by virtue of not being highly visible from the road on the other side of the Colorado River, has remained almost entirely undisturbed. The canyon itself has been formed by erosion through several geological layers, creating interesting potholes and exposing striking ripple patterns.

Hal Sundin, Glenwood Springs

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 15,155 acres
BLM Wilderness Study Area: 15,000 acres
BLM Field Office: Glenwood Springs Field Office (Glenwood Springs)
Location: The proposed Bull Gulch Wilderness is located along the Colorado River, approximately 15 miles north of Dotsero in Eagle County

Wilderness Qualities

Bull Gulch is unique among wilderness candidates in Colorado as the only area that encompasses a substantial mid-elevation tributary of the Colorado River. Bull Gulch cuts through the forested redrock country of the Colorado River drainage above Dotsero, a remarkable ecological transition point between the alpine source of the Colorado and the desert canyon country through which the river travels on its way to the sea.

Dropping precipitously from a forested rim at 9,700 feet, Bull Gulch slices through the deep red formations of Maroon Bells fame as it drains into the Colorado River at an elevation of 6,400 feet. The entrance to Bull Gulch is a labyrinth of twisting corridors and sculpted bowls carved through the maroon sandstone. There sound of the big river is replaced by the tinkle of dripping seeps that line the canyon walls.

The lower reaches of Bull Gulch are covered by dense pinyon-juniper forests, which give way at higher elevations to stands of aspen, Douglas fir, blue spruce, and ponderosa pine. Bull Gulch is a vivid pallet of color in fall Golden Aspen highlight the red sandstone, the dark green spruce, and the fir. The blue sky tops towering cliffs of blinding white sandstone.

Bull Gulch provides important winter range for deer and elk. These populations are, prey for populations of mountain lion, bobcat, and coyote. Prairie falcons nest in the area, and hunting perches for endangered bald eagles have been identified as well.

The Colorado River provides whitewater boating

opportunities along the area's western edge. Dramatic views of the Flat Tops to the west are available from the higher slopes in the eastern and southern portions of Bull Gulch.

A comprehensive survey of archeological sites has not been undertaken for Bull Gulch, but four campsites with lithic scatter and one site containing rare tipi poles have been identified.

Resource Information

No deposits of locatable minerals are known to exist within Bull Gulch. BLM considers Bull Gulch to have low potential for oil and gas reserves. There are no mineral leases within the area and no mining claims.



Bull Gulch slices through the deep red formations. (John Fielder)

Portions of five grazing allotments exist within the unit.

Bull Gulch borders the Colorado River but none of the river's course lies within its boundaries. Several perennial streams exist within the area: Alamo Creek is entirely within the unit, and Posey Creek and Greenhorn Gulch drain from higher elevation lands east of the area. There is a 7.5 cfs diversion on Greenhorn Gulch upstream of the wilderness, and two ditches -- one 5.6 cfs and the other 6.3 cfs -- feed a small reservoir and other diversions on Posey Creek above the wilderness boundary.

Boundary Issues

Citizens propose boundaries for Bull Gulch which are identical to BLM's Wilderness Study Area boundary.



Bull Gulch is an ecological transition point between the alpine source of the Colorado and the desert canyon country.

Bull Gulch Proposed Wilderness Area

Glenwood Springs Field Office

July 1, 2006

