

Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal

Kings Canyon

Edward Abbey once said "In Wilderness is the Preservation of the Mind." Traveling by foot through this pristine canyon offered therapeutic relief from the urban environment that lies just miles away in the Grand Valley. Indeed, Kings Canyon – filled with piñon and juniper conifers, high on the Uncompahgre Plateau – offers 'preservation of the mind'.

Joshua Houdek, Grand Junction

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 9,398 acres
BLM Wilderness Study Area: not studied
BLM Field Office: Grand Junction Field Office (Grand Junction)
Location: Kings Canyon is located on the Colorado-Utah border in Mesa County, approximately 20 miles southwest of Fruita.

Wilderness Qualities

Cliffs rise 1,000 feet above the Little Dolores River like the parapets of an enormous castle. The canyon walls twist and turn into Kings and Tom Canyons, the main canyons in the Kings Canyon unit. "The Water Jugs" are a prominent rock formation in the area that lend a fascinating geologic point of interest to the dramatic forces of erosion in an elevation range of 5,600 - 6,500 feet.

Kings Canyon is long and wide with rolling pinyon-juniper forests and expansive parks of sage shrublands. Tom Canyon is narrow and short with high sandstone walls. The mesas atop the canyon rims command views of the Little Dolores River and give way to a vast landscape of pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush basins reaching into Utah.

Peregrine falcon and bald eagle inhabit the Kings Canyon area. The contiguous 26,675-acre Westwater Canyon proposed wilderness area in neighboring Utah makes the Kings Canyon unit an important component of a larger wild area that spans the state line and encompasses important desert drainages.

Resource Information

No Land within the unit have been leased for oil and gas.

Grazing is the primary commercial use of the unit and the entire area is under grazing permits, including parts of six grazing allotments issued by the BLM. Numerous reservoirs occur in the unit, along with check dams. Fifteen check dams are concentrated in

the SW part of the unit. Fences and developed springs are also scattered within the unit.

Primary human activities include deer hunting and wood-cutting, specifically in the chained areas on the ridgetops.

The area is presently open to motorized recreation.

Boundary Issues

The unit's western boundary generally follows the Colorado/Utah state line. Utah citizens propose the 26,675 acre Westwater Canyon area just west of the state line. The area's eastern and southern boundaries are defined by BLM and county roads, and the northern boundary by private property along the Little Dolores River.



Wildflowers blooming in the CWP.

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