

Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal

Pinyon Ridge

From the top of Pinyon Ridge, you have unimpeded views of the magnificent White River Valley and miles of rolling wild terrain.

Kurt Kunkle, Rifle

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 20,903 acres
BLM Wilderness Study Area: not studied
BLM Field Office: White River Field Office (Meeker)
Location: Pinyon Ridge straddles the Moffat and Rio Blanco county line approximately 30 miles northwest of Meeker.

Wilderness Qualities

Pinyon Ridge consists of rolling hills immediately north of the White River. From a sheer and abrupt bluff, the hills overlook a broad basin of high mesas and deep arroyos. There are sweeping scenic vistas of the White River Valley, the Danforth Hills, and the mesas of the Rangely Basin. Pinyon Ridge is one of the very few undeveloped areas of the lower White River drainage.

Pinyon Ridge is an arid area, cut by numerous seasonal streams that create a spiderweb of isolated drainages. Sagebrush, grasses, and cacti cover the lower elevations and pinyon-juniper forest blankets the hills and ridges.

A wide variety of wildlife exists within the area. Eagles and other raptors build nests along ridge outcrops and prey on the extensive prairie dog populations. Larger mammals such as deer, coyotes, and mountain lions inhabit the forested slopes. The western portion of the area is identified as suitable habitat for reintroduction of black-footed ferret.

Hunting is the primary recreational use of Pinyon Ridge. Access to the interior of the area is facilitated by the few overgrown ways that enable the visitor to reach vantage points throughout the unit. Pinyon Ridge is also particularly well suited for hiking owing to its outstanding scenic qualities, and the overgrown ways provide excellent foot and horse trails for exploration. Steep canyons and mesas in the western sections of Pinyon Ridge offer challenging hikes and climbs for the more adventurous.

Resource Information

Oil and gas leases exist in the area.

There are no existing mining claims within the area.

Portions of four grazing allotments overlap the proposed wilderness. These allotments are primarily for winter and spring cattle use, though one allotment contains a portion of a sheep allotment.

Motorized vehicles are generally limited to existing roads during the winter months (October through April), except in the black footed ferret reintroduction area where limits are in place year round.

No water rights are situated within the proposed wilderness.

Though it is bounded by the White River, Pinyon Ridge is a headwaters area as no water courses flow into the area.



Hikers in the CWP. (Kurt Kunkle)

Boundary Issues

The southern limit of the area generally corresponds with the BLM/private land boundary. The eastern boundary follows jeep trails, excluding private land, which serve as a definitive management boundary for the area.

The northern boundary is defined by jeep roads and the presence of oil and gas exploration impacts north of the Coal Creek drainage. The steep topography of Coal Creek effectively shields the remainder of the unit from these impacts. Except for a small amount of excluded private land, the western border runs along an overgrown way above an underground gas pipeline. Access to the mesas, drainages, and deep side-canyons on the west face of Pinyon Ridge is available from this pipeline way. The boundary includes about 960 acres of state school sections.

Pinyon Ridge Proposed Wilderness Area

White River Field Office

July 1, 2006

