

GOSHUTE CANYON INSTANT STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA - 7,650 acres

The Goshute Canyon Natural Area is located approximately 60 road miles north of Ely, Nevada in White Pine County and contains 7,650 acres of public lands. Except for the eastern and western portions of the natural area (2,641 acres), the bulk of the acreage (5,009 acres) is included with the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area (35,594 acres). The Goshute Canyon Natural Area was designated in 1970 for the protection of Utah Cutthroat Trout, an uncommon fish species confined to a few locations of the intermountain west. The fish is on the State of Nevada's endangered species list.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 7,650 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The natural area was inventoried and evaluated separately from the comprehensive roadless inventory during a special project inventory in 1978 in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. That inventory found that the Goshute Canyon Natural Area did not possess sufficient wilderness character to warrant a recommendation for wilderness designation. The area appears to be natural but it does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Some supplemental values are present within the natural area such as scenic, archaeological, and scientific values.

Accordingly, the Instant Study Area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration in the Goshute Canyon Natural Area Nevada BLM Wilderness Report dated February, 1980. The area did not qualify, by itself, as a WSA. However, as the report stated on page 16, the area "may qualify when considered with the contiguous roadless lands." The Section 603 inventory, authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, included the middle portion of the Goshute Canyon Natural Area within the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area.

The long and short term effects of releasing the Goshute Canyon Instant Study Area from interim management protection would be that all uses which were previously compatible within the Natural Area outside of the boundaries of the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area would continue to be permitted.

3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

A. Naturalness: The landscape character in general remains substantially natural. A four wheel drive road bounds the eastern side of the western portion of the Instant Study Area. The eastern area is bounded by a road to the south and traversed by a county road to the east. Other unnatural features of this area include riparian fence enclosures for the protection of fish habitat and several water diversion ditches.

B. Solitude: The open terrain and low vegetation of both portions the Instant Study Area limit the ability of the visitor to avoid others or the sights and sounds of traffic and ranching activities. Opportunities for solitude are not considered to be outstanding in this area.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Hiking, camping, fishing, nature study and photography are some of the activities which may occur in this area, but neither the diversity nor quality of these activities are considered outstanding.

D. Special Features: The eastern portion may support populations of the Utah Cutthroat Trout.

4. MANAGEABILITY:

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size, the lack of natural boundaries and limited wilderness character.

5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was prepared for the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area which includes the Natural Area. The potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources within the study area is considered to be low. The findings of more recent oil and gas exploration in this area are not known. The potential for other mineral resources is considered to be low.

6. SUMMARY OF WSA - SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The Goshute Canyon Natural Area was inventoried separately from the comprehensive roadless review area during an early special inventory conducted in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. A public meeting was held in Ely, Nevada on January 14, 1980 to describe the findings of the special inventory and to invite public comment. A 30-day public comment review period was held from January 1, 1980 to January 30, 1980.

Two comments were received during the public review period. One comment noted intrusions and a lack of solitude opportunities while the other supported wilderness. A summary of other comments received during formal public review of the draft EIS and Wilderness Technical Report for the Goshute Canyon Wilderness Study Area are found in the Nevada BLM Statewide Wilderness Report, Oct. 1991, Vol. 4.