

GMUG – Dominguez Roadless Area (#20465) Trip Report – 6/30/2017

Who: Janice Shepherd, Mary Hertert

Where: Winter Camp Trail (#645) from Winter Camp for approximately 1.3 miles and then a loop of wandering off trail to the south.

Trip stats: 5 miles 3 ½ hours

Observations:

Trail follows user-created road and is not a trail designed specifically for primitive recreation, thus it may miss opportunities for views and may by-pass interesting geological or biological resources.

Wildflowers in bloom along trail including: scarlet gila, sego lily, prickly pear, Indian paintbrush, penstemon, lupine

Other plants: nice stands of ponderosa pine, old juniper and pinyon, cattails at pond, mountain ball cactus

Wildlife observations: horny toad, bear scat and prints, elk scat and prints, tiger swallowtails and smaller butterflies, tadpoles, hummingbird

Nice views of distant terrain with no obvious man-made intrusions such as roads, power lines – instead lots of green slopes with a mix of forest, shrubs and open sage brush meadows.

Wonderful sound-scape with all natural sounds, we heard no sounds of motors other than a few planes passing overhead. No sounds of other people.

Interesting rock formations viewed at a distance and a slope of bentonite.

Man-made resources: quite limited: a single cattle allotment fence and a single pond. We left the trail to find the pond and while we recognized it as man-made it had a nice natural feel with its surrounding cattails and willows and the thriving tadpoles population.

Wilderness Potential:

Capability:

Naturalness/Solitude: The trail gets very little use, so for those who visit the area, much of the landscape feels like it might have looked the same for hundreds of years. The variety of vegetation along the trail keeps the interest level high for the hiker as to what's around the next bend. The area is very quiet and a pleasant breeze kept us feeling cool.

Challenge: Approximately 2 miles of the hike was off-trail and varied from open sagebrush meadow, forest with open understory and forest with thick brush. It was fun relying on our skills of observation and orienteering to find our way and we were rewarded with a spot that had a breath-taking 180 degree view of the ridgelines to the south, the distant San Juan mountains, Little Dominguez canyon, Dominguez Ridge, Black Point, Brush Mountain and Brush Ridge, Grand Mesa.

Special Features/Activities: Part of the area is adjacent to the BLM managed Dominguez Wilderness Area and planning a primitive outing that connects the two wild areas has great appeal. A few prehistoric tool

flakes and a rusted historic can were observed and their presence adds to the appeal of the area by connecting us to long ago past.

Other Observations:

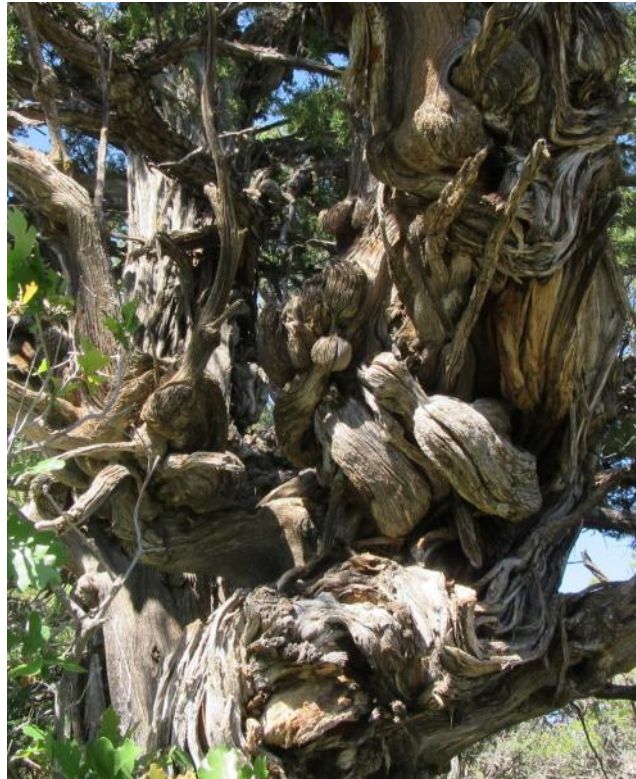
A new cattle guard has been installed on the road 408.3A “Winter Camp Road” – the side braces for the cattle guard were not used and instead left **dumped** on the slope beside the cattle guard.

Photos:

Trees, plants:



Nice stand of ponderosa pine



Interesting gnarly tree





Trail crossing through open meadow.

Appealing Natural Views





Varied terrain:



Sagebrush meadow below ridgeline with majestic ponderosa pines.



Bentonite slopes “bad lands” and Grand Mesa in the distance.

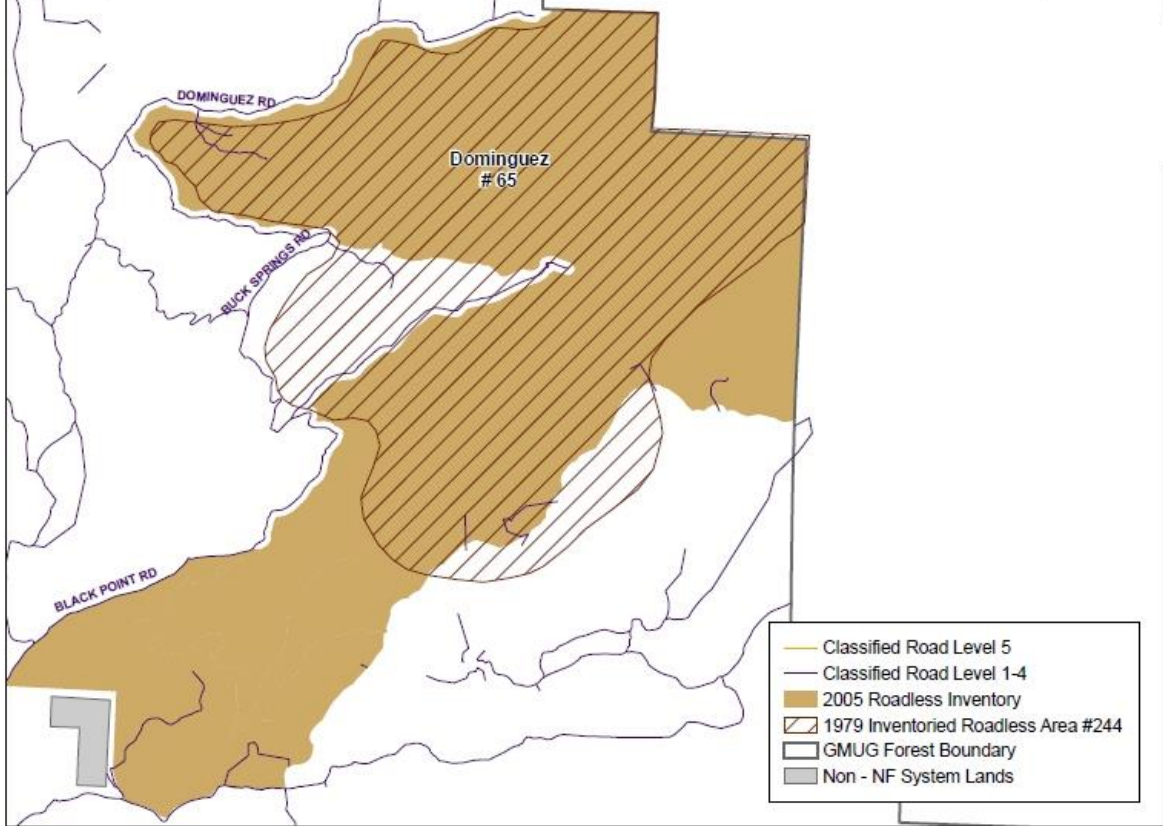


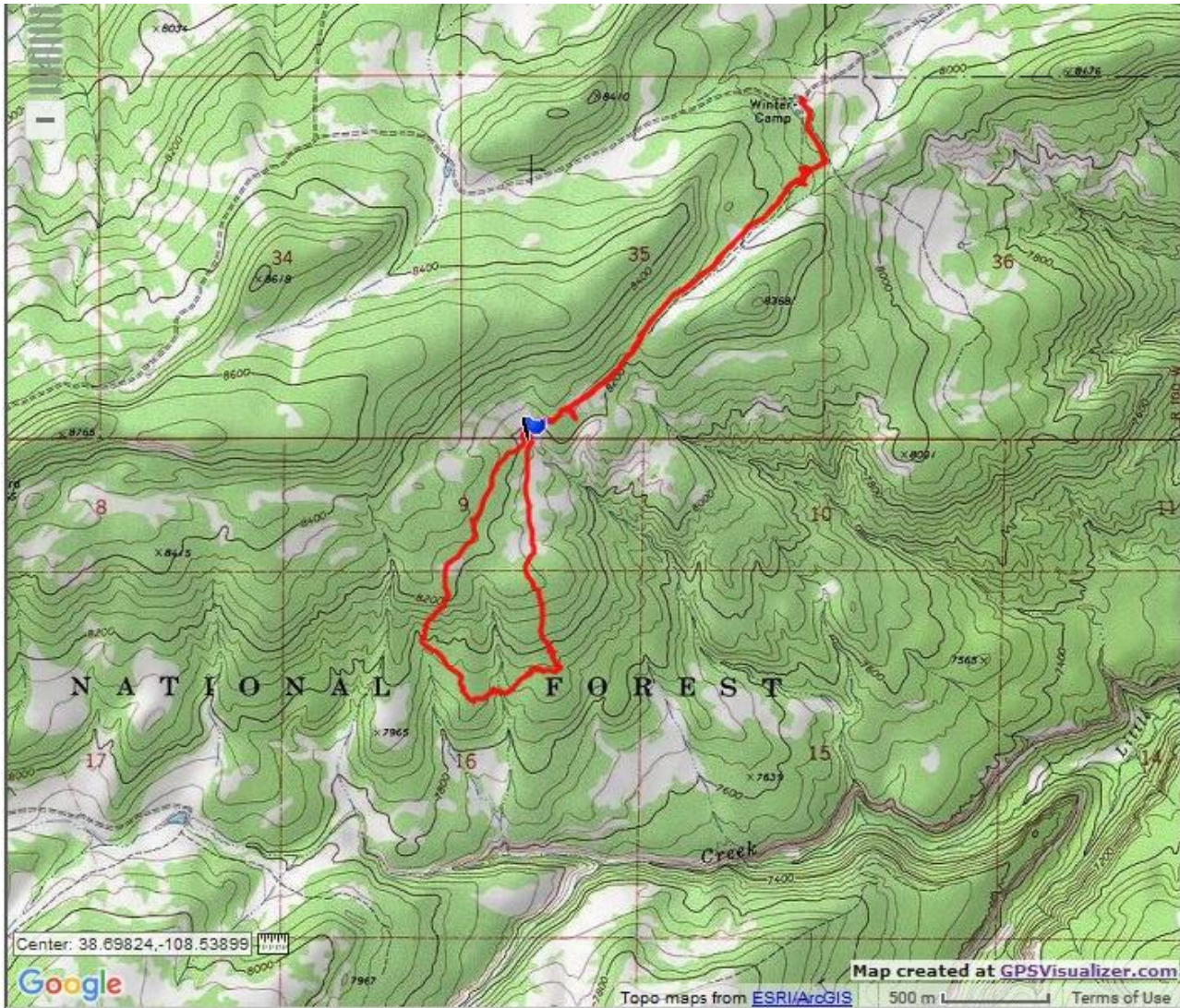
Forest with open understory makes for interesting off-trail exploring.



Pond with tadpoles and cattails and willows.

1979 Inventoried Roadless Area compared to 2005 Roadless Inventory





GPX track from 6/30/2017 hike. Left trail at Blue Flag for some fun off-trail challenging exploration.

