



Samantha Staley, Forest Planner
Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forest
2250 South Main St
Delta, Colorado 81416
gmugforestplan@fs.fed.us

May 21, 2018

Dear Ms. Staley,

The Ridgway Town Council appreciates the opportunity to comment during the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forest Plan revision scoping period.

The Town Council supports the Citizens' Wilderness Designation Proposal. We wish specifically to endorse inclusion of the five landscapes located within Ouray County – White House Addition to Mt Sneffels Wilderness, Baldy Mountain and Bear Creek Additions to the Uncompahgre Wilderness, Hayden Mountain, and Abram and Brown Mountains. These areas all possess wilderness values that warrant their ongoing protection and management as wilderness.

Designating these landscapes in the Forest Plan will favorably impact our region's economy, ecosystem integrity and resiliency, watersheds, wildlife corridors and habitats, and recreation opportunities. Furthermore, these landscapes possess spectacular geology, unmatched wildflower displays, and exceptional scenic values. Some of them include cultural and historic features, and all of them are critical wildlife areas – for elk, deer, and bear and some for Canada Lynx.

The Town of Ridgway Town Council requests that the GMUG planning team incorporate the Citizens' Wilderness Designation Proposal in your draft plan and alternatives moving forward in the revision process. Thank you for your consideration of the Ridgway Town Council's comments.

Sincerely,

Jen Coates
Manager, Town of Ridgway

Hayden Mountain Recommended Wilderness

Proposed Wilderness Designation
Uncompahgre National Forest
Ouray Ranger District

10,000 acres



General Description

Hayden Mountain provides a breathtaking backdrop to the Million Dollar Highway, also known as the San Juan Skyway scenic byway. Hayden Mountain towers impressively above the west side of Highway 550 from Ouray to the summit of Red Mountain Pass. Hayden Mountain includes high snowcapped summits, quiet alpine basins, and sweeping aspen stands that erupt in riotous fall colors of orange, red and gold starting in September. The area's trails are a favorite destination of both local hikers and the many tourists who visit Ouray.

Hayden Mountain sits squarely between the Uncompahgre Wilderness to the east and the Mount Sneffels Wilderness immediately to the west. It's in the heart of lynx habitat in the northern San Juan Mountains. Wilderness designation would plug a key gap in the system of wilderness areas that otherwise encircle Hayden Mountain on several sides.

Hayden Mountain's roadless character, and associated wilderness values, has never been inventoried by the Forest Service. The area was omitted from the 1970s-era Roadless Area Review and Evaluations as it was within the Uncompahgre Primitive Area at the time, and was also never subsequently inventoried for analysis during the Colorado Roadless Rule process in the early 2000s.

Naturalness

Hayden Mountain is an undeveloped range of seven high points including several 13,000-foot summits amidst one of Colorado's otherwise intensively mined landscapes. It towers above the Camp Bird mine to the west, and the Idarado mine to the south. The area's precipitous slopes precluded any substantial amount of surface disturbance that significantly impairs the area's overall naturalness. Some historic mining activities are apparent in the southern reaches of the area. Several mine dumps and an historic cabin remain at the Senator Beck mine, but the mine is dwarfed by the expansive landscape and beauty surrounding it. An automated weather station operated by the Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies is located in the basin of Senator Beck mine. Other mining relics dot the shoreline of Ptarmigan Lake, including an historic mine shack. A locked gate



precludes motorized use of the historic jeep trail from Imogene Pass down to Ptarmigan Lake. These are similar historic structures to those found in the nearby Weminuche Wilderness in Chicago Basin, or in the Holy Cross Wilderness. The jeep roads to Barstow Mine and Greyhound Mine along with the mine sites are excluded from the proposed wilderness. The jeep road between the mines and adjacent to Spirit Gulch is abandoned and undergoing natural revegetation and thus included within the proposed wilderness.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation

Hayden Mountain is classic, high alpine San Juan Mountain wilderness. The area's elevation provides sweeping vistas across rugged peaks and plunging valleys, reinforcing the sense of isolation and separation from civilization. The area is distant from signs of civilization, once away from the jeep trails that denote the boundaries along Black Bear Pass and Imogene Pass. Secluded alpine basins further enhance the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Hayden Mountain is a preferred destination in summer for hikers seeking vast alpine vistas, fields of alpine wildflowers, and snowfields hanging on late into summer. Backcountry skiers and boarders venture into the high basins and steep slopes in winter, and find the last pockets of snowfields late into spring. Several non-mechanized trails offer ready access for hikers, including the Hayden Mountain trail that traverses the northern end of the area. Historic pack trails lead to secluded locations such as Ptarmigan Lake and the alpine basin surrounding the long abandoned Senator Beck mine.

Size and Roadlessness

Hayden Mountain is 10,000 acres, and excludes open motorized routes that form its boundary, such as the jeep trails over Black Bear Pass and Imogene Pass. The motorized route up Commodore Gulch to the Barstow Mine is also excluded from the proposed wilderness.

Supplemental Values

Hayden Mountain hosts abundant herds of elk in its high basins and alpine meadows during summer. It provides an important summer concentration area for elk and offers seclusion away from region's busier jeep trails.

About one-half of the Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Mineral Basin Potential Conservation Area is located within the Hayden Mountain area. The PCA's vegetation is a mosaic of rocky alpine tundra and wet alpine meadows with high floral diversity dominated by alpine avens. Late melting snowbanks provide the necessary habitat for San Juan whitlow-grass (*Draba graminea*). Two other drabas are found in small amounts in drier, rocky sites. This PCA is rated by CNHP as possessing B2-Very High Biodiversity Significance. Hayden Mountain also bounds the Ironton Park PCA, identified for its uncommon iron fen and wetlands. This broad park occupies a level area where Red Mountain Creek has spread out into several channels, creating the largest wetland in the Uncompahgre Basin.

Manageability

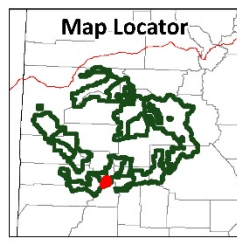
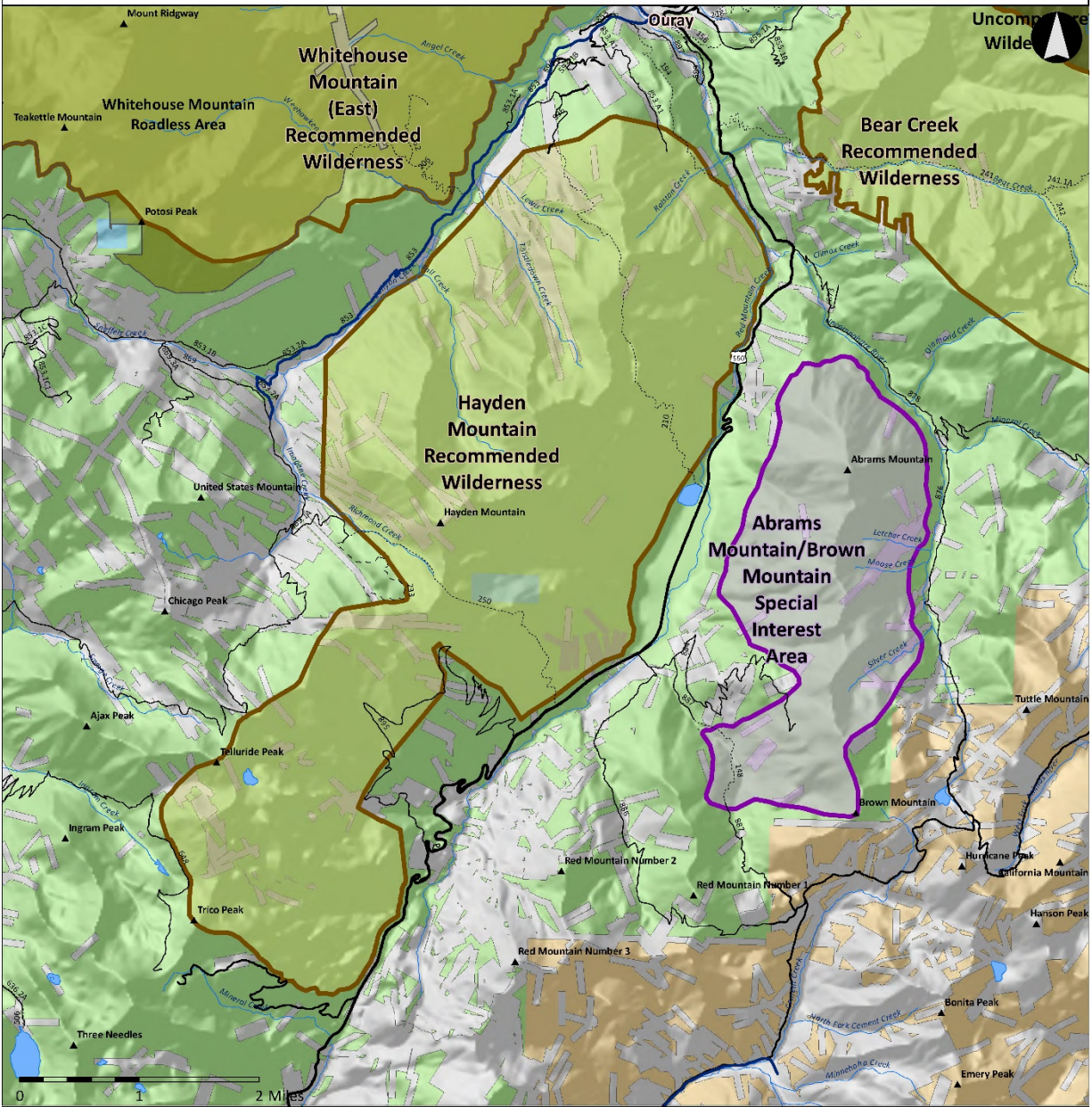
Hayden Mountain is generally well protected from uses incompatible with wilderness by its terrain and topography. The trails are closed to motorized and mechanized uses. The area is generally bounded by Highway 550 to the east, Black Bear Pass jeep trail on the south, Imogene Pass jeep trail on the west, and the Canyon Creek road to the north. The designated motorized routes up to the Barstow Mine and Greyhound Mine are excluded from the proposed wilderness, and form a portion of the eastern boundary. Hayden Mountain's steep topography precludes winter motorized recreation. The area has no oil and gas potential. The Forest Service has acquired numerous patented mining claims from Idarado Mining Company and others, which removes the majority of the most desirable historic mineral veins from future location under the 1872 Mining Law. A number of patented mining claims remain within the area, but these have no historic vehicle access. The Forest Service continues to pursue acquisitions via land exchanges and purchases. Ouray County has strict zoning regulations that limit development on mining claims such as these in the alpine zone above 9,480 feet in elevation.

Information Resources

Item	Data Source
Roadlessness	Colorado Roadless Rule at 36 CFR xx
	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 71
Naturalness; Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 72
	USDA Forest Service, R2, Profiles of Colorado Roadless Areas 2008
	GMUG Roadless Inventory & Evaluation for Potential Wilderness Areas, 2005
Supplemental Values	
Connectivity	SREP Wildlands Network 2003, USDA Forest Service Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment, 2008 Aplet et al, Indicators of Wildness 2000, Belote et al, Identifying Corridors among Large Protected Areas in the United States, 2016
Lynx Potential Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Imogene Pass Potential Conservation Area with Very High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
Ironton Park Potential Conservation Area with Very High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
Mineral Basin Potential Conservation Area with Very High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017

Ouray Canyons Potential Conservation Area with Very High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017

Abrams Mountain/Brown Mountain & Hayden Mountain



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Data Sources: BLM, CDOT, COMaP v10, SRCA, USFS, USGS, wilderness.net

Map Prepared By: Alison Gallensky

 Rocky Mountain Wild

 4/13/2018 18-024 v12

- Legend**
- Major Road
 - CDNST
 - USFS Road
 - Closed USFS Road
 - Trail (snow)
 - Trail (motorized)
 - Trail (non-motorized)

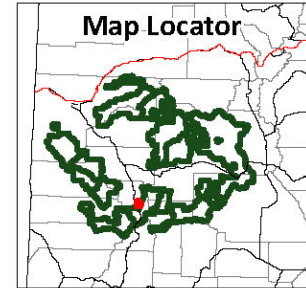
- Recommended Wilderness
- Linkage Area
- Special Interest Area/Other
- Roadless Area (FS)
- Wilderness Study Area (BLM)
- Wilderness

- Land Ownership**
- USFS
 - BLM
 - NPS
 - State
 - Other Public
 - Tribe
 - Private

Baldy Addition to Uncompahgre Wilderness

Proposed Wilderness Designation
Uncompahgre National Forest
Ouray Ranger District

2,400 acres



General Description

The Baldy addition to the Uncompahgre Wilderness adds critical wildlife habitat to the existing wilderness and extends the wilderness to lower elevation habitats that are generally not included within designated wilderness on the GMUG. Gambel oak and oak/aspen dominate the lower elevations transitioning to aspen and mixed aspen-conifer (including pine) with spruce-fir at higher elevations and north-facing slopes. Several meadows also exist in the area.

Naturalness

The Baldy roadless area appears generally natural with few obvious imprints of human activity. One metal water basin with a pipe exists at approximately 9,600 feet at the location of a natural spring, but does not detract from the character and is barely visible from the trail.



Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation

Although the hike to Baldy Peak is relatively easy and the summit tops out at only 10,603 feet, there are ample opportunities for solitude and a sense of seclusion and tranquility. Given that this roadless area abuts designated wilderness, one experiences the vast wild landscape and expansive views that Baldy Trail affords.

There is no motorized or mechanized use on the trail, and there is no evidence of backcountry campsites or fire rings along this section of the Baldy Trail. Most users hike to the summit as a day trip so established campsites are absent. The area is primarily popular for hiking and hunting during fall big game seasons.

Panoramic scenic vistas are a highlight of this proposed addition and the Baldy Trail. Kelvin Kent, in his book *Ouray Hiking Guide*, writes, "...it offers some of the best views and scenery of any trail..." Views south reach beyond Cutler Creek, the Amphitheater, Mount Abram and Brown Mountain to the Red Mountains and the high San Juans. The Sneffels and Cimarron

Ranges are sighted as one climbs with spectacular views of some of the region’s highest peaks. On a clear day, a hiker is treated to views as distant as the La Sal Mountains in eastern Utah.

Size and Roadlessness

Baldy is about 2,400 acres in size, but is contiguous with the adjacent 102,214-acre Uncompahgre Wilderness. There are no roads within the unit.

Supplemental Values

The Baldy wilderness addition would contribute to increasing representation of otherwise poorly represented ecosystem types within the existing wilderness preservation system. The wilderness designation adds about 400 acres of Rocky Mountain Gambel Oak-Mixed Montane Shrubland, an ecosystem type with less than five percent representation in existing wilderness at the forest and federal level, and also about 750 acres of Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland, which is represented at less than 20 percent at the forest level.

Baldy provides significant wildlife habitat, particularly as bighorn sheep summer and winter range, a winter concentration area for both elk and mule deer, severe winter range for elk, and an elk production area.

Manageability

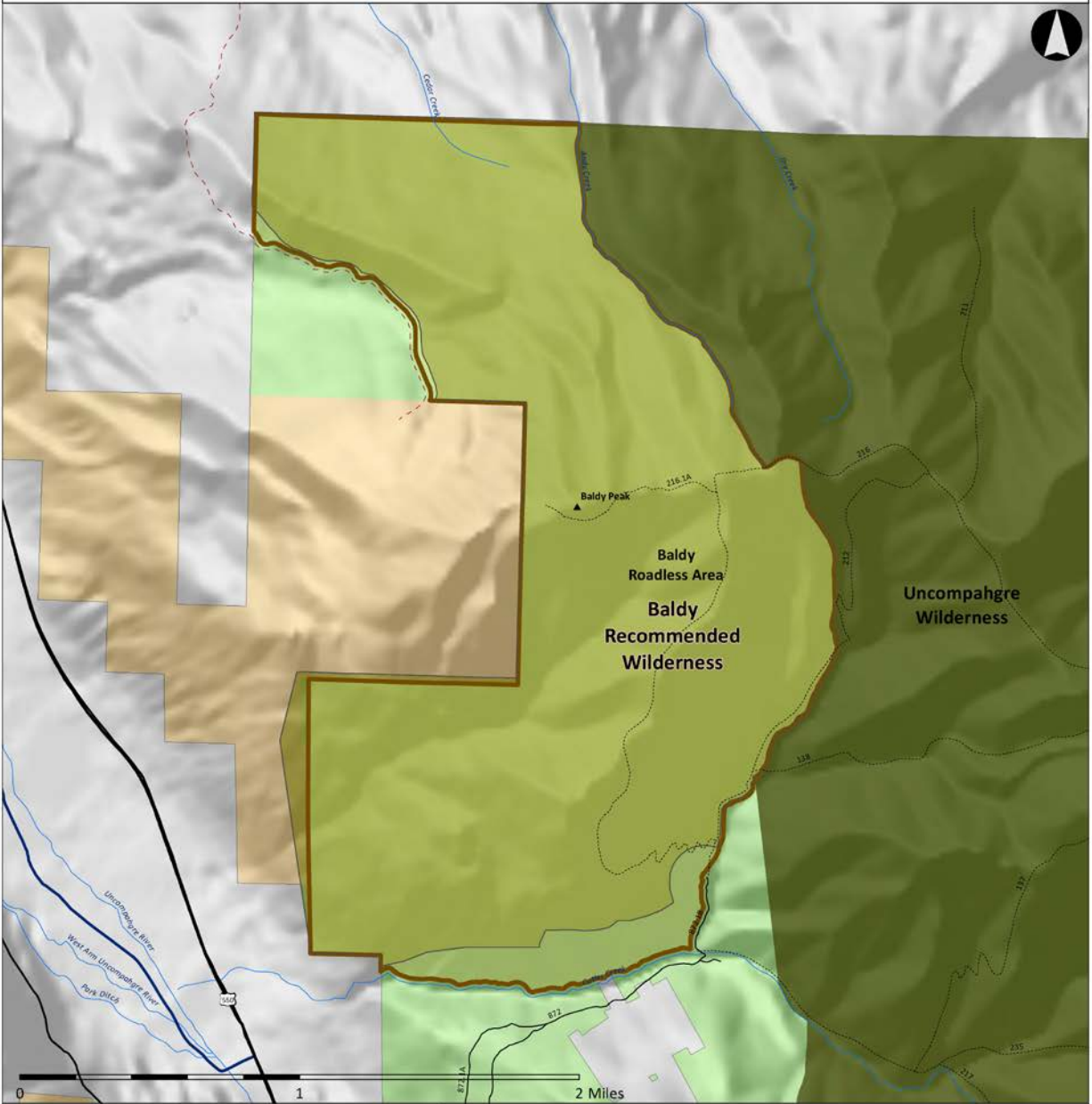
The boundaries of the proposed Baldy addition allow ample buffer from motorized roads and signage is already in place, limiting the trail to hikers and horses. It is bounded by BLM lands generally on the west, and private lands to the north, and is adjacent to the existing wilderness to the east. There is low oil and gas potential.

Information Resources

Item	Data Source
Roadlessness	Colorado Roadless Rule at 36 CFR xx
	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 71
Naturalness; Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 72
	USDA Forest Service, R2, Profiles of Colorado Roadless Areas 2008
	GMUG Roadless Inventory & Evaluation for Potential Wilderness Areas, 2005
Supplemental Values	
Bighorn Sheep Winter Concentration Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017

Elk Production Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Elk Severe Winter Range	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Elk Winter Concentration Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Gunnison Sage-grouse Historic Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Lynx Potential Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Mule Deer Winter Concentration Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Ecosystem Representation	TWS Ecosystem Representation 2016

Baldy



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Data Sources: BLM, CDOT, COMaP v10, SRCA, USFS, USGS, wilderness.net

Map Prepared By: Alison Gallensky, Rocky Mountain Wild, 4/13/2018 18-024 v12

- Legend**
- Major Road
 - CDNST
 - USFS Road
 - Closed USFS Road
 - Trail (snow)
 - Trail (motorized)
 - Trail (non-motorized)

- Recommended Wilderness
- Linkage Area
- Special Interest Area/Other
- Roadless Area (FS)
- Wilderness Study Area (BLM)
- Wilderness

- Land Ownership**
- USFS
 - BLM
 - NPS
 - State
 - Other Public
 - Tribe
 - Private

Bear Creek Addition to Uncompahgre Wilderness

Proposed Wilderness Designation
Uncompahgre National Forest
Ouray Ranger District

6,000 acres



General Description

The Bear Creek addition to the Uncompahgre Wilderness brings the wilderness boundary closer to Highway 550 – the Million Dollar Highway -- incorporating the entirety of the Bear Creek watershed, from the highway to the alpine tundra atop Engineer Pass. It includes seven miles of the Bear Creek National Recreation Trail, so designated owing to its extraordinary scenery and the uncommon nature of its construction – literally dynamited out of the cliff along the lower reaches of Bear Creek.

The wilderness addition extends north to include the entirety of the Bridge of Heaven and the Horsethief Trail along Cascade Mountain, a hiking route with incomparable views and dramatic drop-offs.

Land acquisitions have consolidated federal ownership along Bear Creek, with the majority of remaining patented claims on the most precipitous cliffs at the lower end of the creek, near the highway. The rugged nature of Bear Creek precludes constructed road access to these inholdings, making conflicts with future wilderness management unlikely.

Bear Creek is a superlative wilderness candidate and adds seven miles of roadless valley to the wilderness. The trail is for hikers only owing to the long, horizontal shelves blasted out of the cliff faces and the sheer drop-offs to the creek below. Two historic mining camps add historical flavor and interest to the adventure. A myriad of waterfalls from trickles to thundering cascades enhances both the scenery and the auditory appeal of the wilderness.

Naturalness

The Bear Creek trail was originally developed by miners starting in the 1870s, and remnants of historic activities occur at several locations. These dilapidated cabins and rusting mining equipment add historic value and do not detract from the larger undeveloped character of the valley. The historic mining relics are similar in scale to those frequently encountered in other wilderness locations,



including Chicago Basin in the Weminuche and Silver Jack Mine in the Uncompahgre.

The Bridge of Heaven and Horsethief Trail addition is in superlative natural condition. It includes the steep slopes above various historic mines, such as the Portland Mine and the Chief Ouray Mine, all of which are excluded from the wilderness addition.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation

The Bear Creek valley and trail offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. The trail rapidly gains elevation from Highway 550, creating a substantial elevation separation from the highway. Once the trail wraps around into the entrance of the valley, the steep walls close in and create a sensation of complete isolation. The Horsethief Trail offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, seclusion and tranquility.

The Bear Creek National Recreation Trail was designated in recognition of its unique and spectacular nature. The trail was established initially by miners in the late 1800s, and required blasting a ledge into cliff faces to skirt the most precipitous canyon segments. This creates a remarkable and scenic experience unlike any other in southwest Colorado. The trail and surroundings offer outstanding opportunities for unconfined primitive recreation. The Horsethief Trail leads to Bridge of Heaven, one of the classic hikes in the Ouray area that leads to phenomenal views high above treeline.

Size and Roadlessness

Bear Creek is about 6,000 acres in size, but is contiguous with the adjacent 102,214-acre Uncompahgre Wilderness. There are no roads within the unit.

Supplemental Values

Relics of hardrock mining provide historic interest. The Grizzly Bear Mine and Yellow Jacket Mine were established in the late 1800s, with both ceasing operation by 1915. The ruins of several cabins, a tunnel, and mining equipment mark the location of the Grizzly Bear Mine. The Yellow Jacket mining camp is better preserved, with an intact bunk house and assorted mining equipment. Both sites make for intriguing trip destinations.

Bear Creek provides significant wildlife habitat, particularly as bighorn sheep summer and winter range, and as a bighorn sheep production area. The area is also a winter concentration area for elk.

Manageability

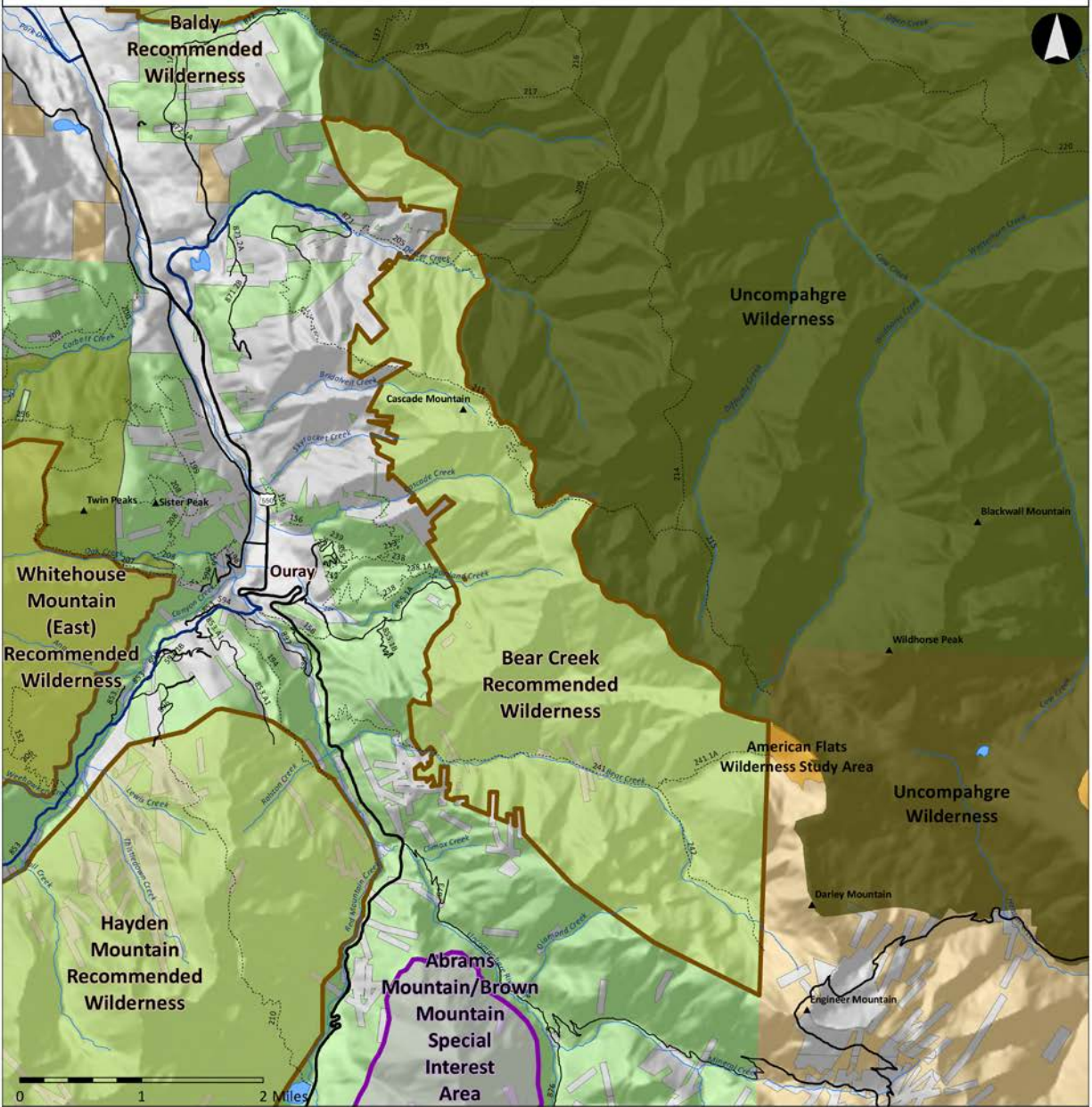
Bear Creek's rugged lower end precludes the possibility of motorized access from Highway 550 to the patented mining claims that dot the valley's cliffs. There is no vehicle access from the top, from Engineer Pass. For safety reasons, the trail is limited to hikers only. There is no oil and gas potential, and apparently limited potential for hardrock minerals since the last production ceased in the early 1900s.

The Horsethief Trail portion is steep, which precludes unauthorized motorized incursions. The boundary excludes all of the developed and patented mining claims in the lower portions below the wilderness boundary in Cascade Creek, Bridalveil Creek, and Dexter Creek.

Information Resources

Item	Data Source
Roadlessness	Colorado Roadless Rule at 36 CFR xx
	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 71
Naturalness; Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 72
	USDA Forest Service, R2, Profiles of Colorado Roadless Areas 2008
	GMUG Roadless Inventory & Evaluation for Potential Wilderness Areas, 2005
Supplemental Values	
Connectivity	SREP Wildlands Network 2003, USDA Forest Service Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment, 2008 Aplet et al, Indicators of Wildness 2000, Belote et al, Identifying Corridors among Large Protected Areas in the United States, 2016
Bighorn Sheep Production Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Elk Winter Concentration Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Lynx Potential Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Dexter Creek Potential Conservation Area with Moderate Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
Historic	David Day, Colorado's Incredible Backcountry Trails, 2009

Bear Creek



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Data Sources: BLM, CDOT, COMaP v10, SRCA, USFS, USGS, wilderness.net

Map Prepared By:
Alison Gallensky
Rocky Mountain Wild
4/13/2018 18-024 v12

- Legend**
- Major Road
 - CDNST
 - USFS Road
 - Closed USFS Road
 - Trail (snow)
 - Trail (motorized)
 - Trail (non-motorized)

- Recommended Wilderness
- Linkage Area
- Special Interest Area/Other
- Roadless Area (FS)
- Wilderness Study Area (BLM)
- Wilderness

- Land Ownership**
- USFS
 - BLM
 - NPS
 - State
 - Other Public
 - Tribe
 - Private

Abrams Mountain Scenic Special Interest Area

Proposed Designated Area
Uncompahgre National Forest
Ouray Ranger District

3,000 acres



General Description

At 12,801 feet, Abrams Mountain (aka Mount Abrams), is an iconic peak that rises steeply and directly above the city of Ouray and can be viewed for many miles while driving from Montrose toward Ouray. It is the centerpiece landscape feature for the City of Ouray and surrounding area. Gray Copper Falls and several other falls are outstanding scenic features just west of Brown Mountain. There are several historic mines on the slopes of Abrams Mountain and Brown Mountain. Elk, deer and bighorn sheep use the area. The area is not identified as a Colorado Roadless Area.

Scenic Values

Mount Abrams dominates the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway for most of its length from Red Mountain Pass across Ironton Park. Its lush green slopes provide a spectacular backdrop to Ouray during the summer, and it is equally beautiful in the winter. From the summit, there are spectacular views to the south of the Red Mountains (1,2,3) and across the valley to Hayden Mountain.

Abrams Mountain is part of the long four-mile Brown Mountain ridge, which rises up and down several summits to a high point of 13,339 feet that is the official summit of Brown Mountain. Also known as Duco Mountain, it is identified by a benchmark on the summit. The spectacular Gray Copper Falls and trail is directly west of the Brown Mountain summit. The upper end of the Gray Copper Falls trail intersects with a popular jeep trail spur off the Corkscrew Pass road near the Vernon mine, but the Gray Copper Falls Trail offers visitors a beautiful hike to see the falls. The ridge and summit areas along Brown Mountain see very little use except for hikers who wish to traverse the ridge via a climber trail of sorts.

Gray Copper Falls is a primary destination and scenic feature of the area. The falls is a thundering cascade during spring snowmelt,



plunging off the cliff edge and creating a perfect frothing arc of water.

Several interpretive visitor overlooks are located along Highway 550 and feature vistas and information about the San Juan Skyway and its historic and scenic resources. These are located along the western fringes of the proposed Mount Abrams Scenic Special Interest Area.

Botanical Values

The Ironton Park Potential Conservation Area identified by Colorado Natural Heritage Program is partially contained within the proposed scenic area. The Ironton Park PCA is a B2-Very High Biodiversity Significance site identified for its uncommon iron fen and wetlands. This broad park occupies a level area where Red Mountain Creek has spread out into several channels, creating the largest wetland in the Uncompahgre Basin. The lower slopes of Mount Abrams overlap with the PCA boundary.

Boundary, Size, and Access

The Mount Abrams Scenic Special Interest Area is 3,000 acres and is well-defined by jeep trails in the surrounding valley bottoms and by Highway 550. The Engineer Pass jeep road defines the northern boundary along Mineral Creek, and the rough jeep trail in Poughkeepsie Gulch defines the east boundary. To the west, US Highway 550 traverses through the Ironton area below Red Mountain Pass. The southern end is generally defined by the BLM/Forest Service boundary.

The Brown Mountain jeep road (884) provides rough access on the west side to near treeline where it dead ends near the Lost Day Mine. This proposal omits the Brown Mountain jeep road, but consideration could be made to close the very rough road lower down. The Albany Gulch trail loop located above Ironton could be included to the extent possible given its proximity to Highway 550.

Proposed Management

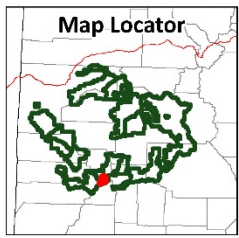
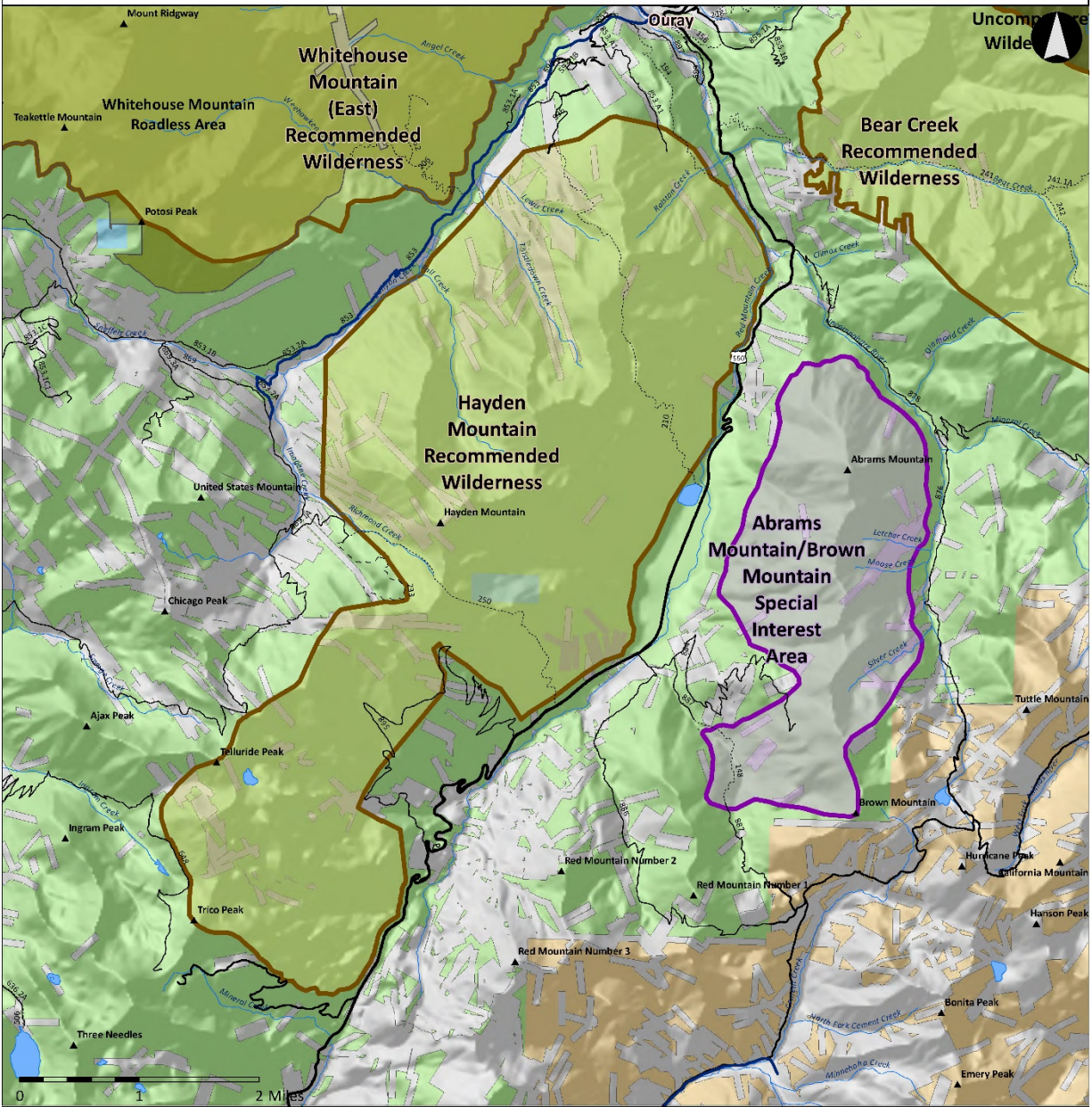
Specific management direction is proposed to ensure protection of scenic values as follows:

- The Mount Abrams Scenic Special Interest Area should be proposed to be withdrawn from mineral entry. It should also be found unsuitable for oil and gas leasing, and made discretionary no-lease.
- Management direction must include prohibition on road construction and limitations on tree removal consistent with management prescribed by the Colorado Roadless Rule, 36 CFR Part 294.43(b), 294.42(b).
- Motorized recreation is prohibited within the area. Best management practices are in place on all access routes and monitored regularly to ensure effectiveness.
- Recreational trail improvements are prioritized for the trail to Gray Copper Falls to bring it up to a sustainable trail standard.

Information Resources

Item	Data Source
Roadlessness	Colorado Roadless Rule at 36 CFR xx
	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 71
San Juan Skyway	San Juan Skyway Corridor Management Plan Progress Report, CDOT 2014
Supplemental Values	
Lynx Potential Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017

Abrams Mountain/Brown Mountain & Hayden Mountain



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Data Sources: BLM, CDOT, COMaP v10, SRCA, USFS, USGS, wilderness.net

Map Prepared By:
Alison Gallensky
Rocky Mountain Wild
4/13/2018 18-024 v12

- Legend**
- Major Road
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 - USFS Road
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 - Trail (motorized)
 - Trail (non-motorized)

- Recommended Wilderness
- Linkage Area
- Special Interest Area/Other
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- Wilderness Study Area (BLM)
- Wilderness

- Land Ownership**
- USFS
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 - Other Public
 - Tribe
 - Private

Whitehouse Mountain Addition to Mount Sneffels Wilderness

**Proposed Wilderness Designation
Uncompahgre National Forest
Ouray Ranger District**

*12,760 acres total
(Whitehouse Mountain
East – 12,000 acres;
Whitehouse Mountain
West – 760 acres)*



General Description

The Whitehouse Mountain addition to Mount Sneffels Wilderness completes the Mount Sneffels Wilderness and one of the most recognizable mountain scenes in Colorado. Countless scenic calendars include the blazing fall colors of the Sneffels Range as viewed from Dallas Divide. The addition would extend the wilderness boundary east from its current location atop the summit of Mount Sneffels to incorporate the remainder of the Sneffels Range.

In addition to incorporating some of the most dramatic, classic and heavily photographed mountain scenery in the San Juans, Whitehouse Mountain includes well-known mountaineering summits like Potosi Peak and Teakettle Mountain, as well as the popular Weehawken Trail near Ouray. The wilderness addition is bounded on the south by the Camp Bird Mine Road, which leads to Yankee Boy Basin and other four-wheel-drive routes heavily used during summer.



Naturalness

The precipitous slopes of Whitehouse Mountain are stereotypical rock and ice wilderness. The steep and rugged nature of the area, combined with an absence of precious metal deposits, precluded road construction and left the area in a natural, undisturbed condition.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive Recreation

The Whitehouse Mountain addition towers thousands of feet above Yankee Boy Basin and Camp Bird. The great elevational differential creates an outstanding sense of solitude, and most locations within the wilderness addition offer unrestricted vistas across much of southwest

Colorado. The peaks are much less visited than the popular namesake of the wilderness, Mount Sneffels, and lightly used trails like that in Blaine Basin offer solitary excursions through alpine flower fields.

The rugged peaks of the Sneffels Range provide challenging mountaineering summits, particularly Potosi Peak and Teakettle Mountain. Other outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation include hiking the Weehawken Trail for views of waterfalls, alpine meadows, and wildflowers. Elk favor the high basins as summer concentration areas, and early season hunters seeking adventurous backcountry hunting can find abundant herds in these remote hideouts. Bighorn sheep favor the area in summer and move across it to access winter range near Ouray.

Size and Roadlessness

Whitehouse Mountain is 12,760 acres, and is contiguous with the existing 16,485-acre Mount Sneffels Wilderness. The proposed wilderness addition contains no roads.

Supplemental Values

Whitehouse Mountain encompasses a portion of two adjacent Potential Conservation Areas identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. The Yankee Boy Basin/Blue Lakes Pass PCA was identified for its occurrence of Colorado Divide whitlow-grass (*Draba streptobrachia*). The East Fork Dallas Creek PCA was designated for its occurrence of a beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) wet meadow and a globally vulnerable lower montane willow carr (*Salix drummondiana/Calamagrostis Canadensis*). Both sites are rated as B4-Moderate Biodiversity Significance.

Manageability

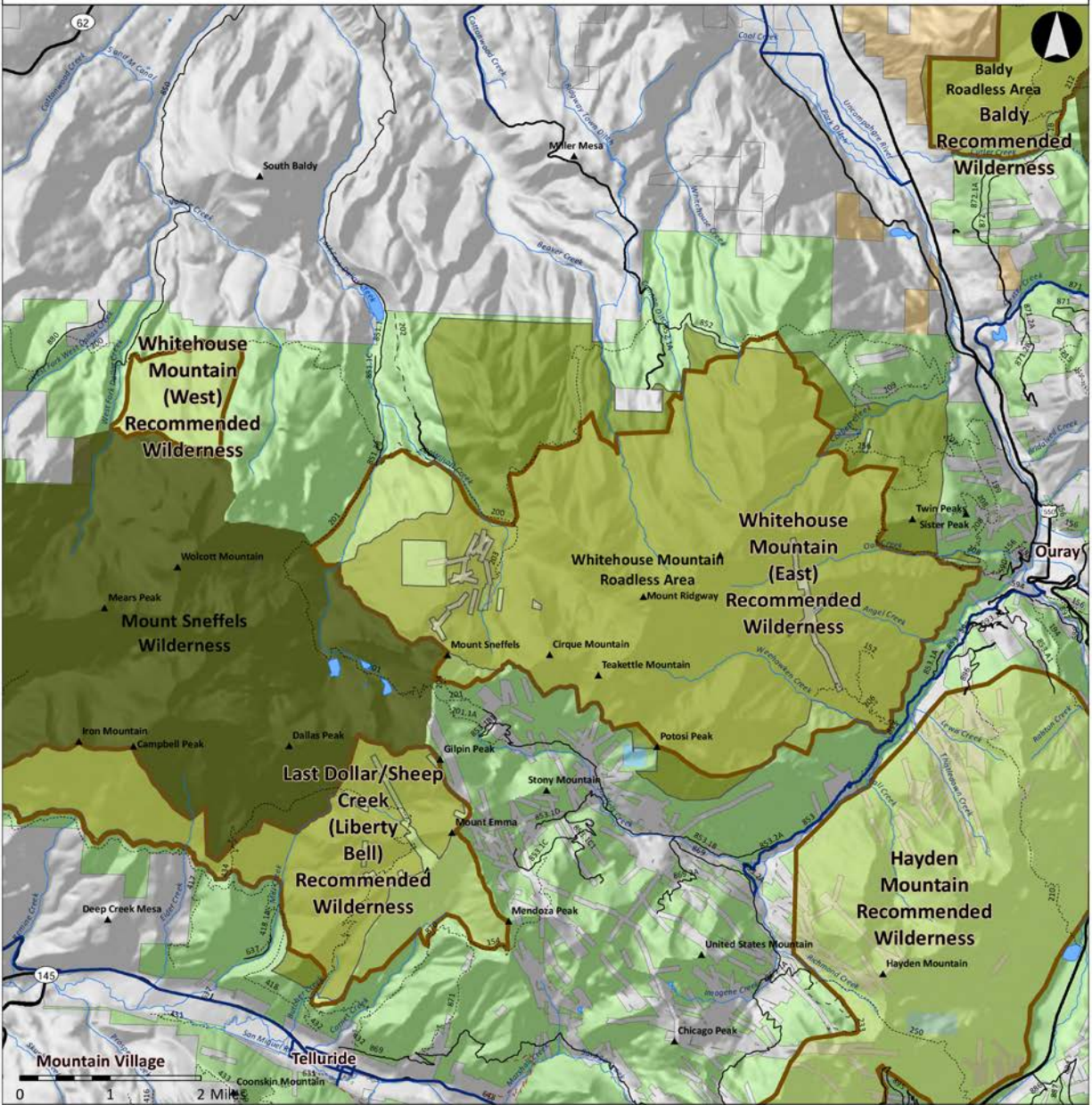
Whitehouse Mountain is well protected against incompatible uses by its precipitous topography. With a wilderness boundary drawn along the Dallas Trail, a winter ski hut and mechanized use are excluded from the proposed wilderness. Remaining trails within the area are non-mechanized. The area has low potential for oil and gas, and hardrock mineral exploration over the past century failed to discover any economically valuable deposits. The area includes a collection of patented mining claims in Blaine Basin, all of which are held by the same ownership. These are generally inaccessible and do not pose a serious impediment to wilderness management. The 2007 draft Forest Plan recommended Whitehouse Mountain for wilderness.

Information Resources

Item	Data Source
Roadlessness	Colorado Roadless Rule at 36 CFR xx
	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 71
Naturalness; Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Primitive	Forest Service inventory pursuant to FSH 1909.12,chapter 70, section 72

Recreation	
	USDA Forest Service, R2, Profiles of Colorado Roadless Areas 2008
	GMUG Roadless Inventory & Evaluation for Potential Wilderness Areas, 2005
Supplemental Values	
Bighorn Sheep Production Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Elk Production Area	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Lynx Potential Habitat	Colorado Parks and Wildlife Species Activity Mapping 2017
Canyon Creek at Ouray Potential Conservation Area with High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
Yankee Boy Basin/Blue Lakes Pass Potential Conservation Area with High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
West Dallas Creek Potential Conservation Area with High Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017
East Fork Dallas Creek Potential Conservation Area with Moderate Biodiversity Significance	Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas 2017

Whitehouse Mountain addition to Mount Sneffels Wilderness



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Data Sources: BLM, CDOT, COMaP v10, SRCA, USFS, USGS, wilderness.net

Map Prepared By:
Alison Gallensky
Rocky Mountain Wild
4/13/2018 18-024 v12

- Legend**
- Major Road
 - CDNST
 - USFS Road
 - Closed USFS Road
 - Trail (snow)
 - Trail (motorized)
 - Trail (non-motorized)

- Recommended Wilderness
- Linkage Area
- Special Interest Area/Other
- Roadless Area (FS)
- Wilderness Study Area (BLM)
- Wilderness

- Land Ownership**
- USFS
 - BLM
 - NPS
 - State
 - Other Public
 - Tribe
 - Private