

Selenite Mountains

Current Proposed Acres: 12,822

CBLC Proposed Acres: 0

WSA Acres: 32,041

Current Management Status:
BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

Area Description

The Selenite Mountains wilderness proposal is located in the northern portion of the Selenite Range in the far western extent of Pershing County. This area is bound by Highway 447 on the west, Jungo Road on the north, and by ranching routes on the east and south. To the north of the area lies the sprawling Black Rock Desert. The west side is determined by remnant mining exploration efforts of U.S. Gypsum and recently abandoned Empire, Nevada. The small town of Gerlach, Nevada is a short distance to the north. The Selenite Mountains rise from 4,200 feet on the north end near the Black Rock Desert up- to 7,100 feet at Selenite Peak. .

Generally oriented north to south, the Selenite Range is comprised of granitic outcrops and cliffs along the ridgeline. East and west of the ridgeline are long sloping alluvial fans with many parallel drainages. The mountain range is sparsely vegetated with sagebrush but there are stands of juniper and mountain mahogany that grow thicker at higher elevations. This area is generally very dry despite wide use for cattle grazing especially on the east side where there are many remote canyons.

Naturalness

Pronghorn are abundant in the area and occupy all but the highest extent of the Selenite Mountains wilderness proposal. Although the area has limited use by mule deer the ridge provides adequate bighorn sheep habitat and nesting habitat for Golden Eagles and other birds of prey. The area has also been identified as general habitat for Greater Sage-grouse. The Nevada Department of Wildlife has installed guzzlers in the range to supplement Greater Sage-grouse and Chukar. The Selenite Range is within the general species range of coyotes and mountain lions as well.



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Recreation and Solitude

The Selenite Mountains proximity to Gerlach, Nevada makes this area a great recreational retreat for locals. Jungo Road is an often used link between Gerlach and Winnemucca, and motorized incursion is visible along the wilderness study area boundary. This area has been excluded from the wilderness proposal to preserve recreation interest and preserve the naturalness of the wilderness proposal. There is limitless opportunity for hiking and great views of sprawling desert playas and tall granite peaks all around. This area is on the route of the proposed National Desert Scenic Trail. Hunting is a popular recreational activity in the area; primarily for upland game birds and pronghorn.

The Selenite Mountains wilderness proposal area represents outstanding opportunity for exploration by rock-hounds and fossil hunters.

Issues and Proposed Resolution

During the Checkerboard Lands Committee process sponsored by Pershing County Commission over the period of time from 2004-2006. After a series of meetings and field trips, the Checkerboard Committee recommended to the Pershing County Commission that Selenite Mountains WSA not be considered for wilderness. This proposal was then adopted by the Pershing County Commission on March 1, 2006. Rationale at the time included conflicts with access routes, access to spring developments and guzzlers.

During the current set of public meetings, the issue was raised about revisiting a portion of the Selenite Mountains for wilderness as a compromise for large releases of proposed wilderness in the Fencemaker and Bluewing areas. A proposal was crafted that eliminated the access concerns raised by the CBLC. The WSA has no mining claims or leases.

Maps

The maps on the following pages show the original Selenite Mountains area as well as the revised area where conflicts have been resolved.

