

Silver Island Mountains

Findings

INVENTORY UNIT ACRES		
Federal	State	Total
With Wilderness Characteristics		
30,600	4,700	35,300 (100%)
Without Wilderness Characteristics		
0	0	0 (0%)
Inventory Unit Total		
30,600	4,700	35,300
Contiguous Area-Wilderness Characteristics		
None		

Both of the Silver Island Mountains inventory units (totaling 35,300 acres) possess wilderness characteristics. Unit 1 is 26,900 acres and Unit 2 encompasses 8,400 acres. While there are some developments, they are substantially unnoticeable in the units as a whole and do not dominate the landscape. The units still retain their apparent naturalness. Rugged topography, numerous canyons, remoteness, and a lack of visitor use all contribute to an outstanding opportunity for solitude. A combination of outstanding primitive recreation opportunities are available, including hiking, camping, rockhounding, photography, horseback riding, hunting, and sightseeing. Supplemental values include geologic, archaeologic, and recreational values.

Unit Description

The Silver Island Mountains inventory units are located in the northwest corner of Tooele County and the southwest corner of Box Elder County, about 15 miles northeast of Wendover, Utah. This range of mountains extends 32 miles into the Great Salt Lake Desert northeast from the Utah/Nevada border. Unit 1 includes the central axis of Silver Island and is located between the Silver Island Pass Road on the south, the Silver Island Canyon Road on the east, the Donner-Reed Pass on the north, and a jeep road on the west. Unit 2 is the northeast corner of Silver Island, separated from Unit 1 by the Silver Island Canyon Road. A 200-acre private inholding has been cherry-stemmed out of Unit 1.

The topography is a composite of gently sloping benches, including Lake Bonneville terraces; foothills; and steep, rugged mountains rising from 5,200 feet to the 7,563-foot summit of Graham Peak in Unit 1 and the 7,021-foot summit of Cobb Peak in Unit 2. The ridge line is rugged, and the forces of nature have chiseled gullies, washes, and canyons in the units. The remains of ancient Lake Bonneville include terraces, benches, and

outwash alluvium. There are no perennial streams. Rugged rocky outcrops cover much of the units and vegetation is sparse. Thin stands of juniper and associated shrubs and grasses occur in the upper reaches of the units, while shrubs and grasses uniformly, but sparsely, cover the lower elevations.

Human uses include hiking, hunting, camping, off-highway vehicle driving, the exploration of caves and historic sites, and some mining-related activities.

Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness

Human developments do not significantly impact the naturalness of the units. Although there is evidence of 13 vehicle ways (totaling 12.6 miles) in Unit 1, their impact is almost negligible. Seventy percent of the vehicle ways are naturally rehabilitating and are barely visible. Evidence of mining exploration exists on the southern portion of Unit 1. Other than a 0.2 mile vehicle way and some mining exploration along the Silver Island Canyon Road, Unit 2 is totally natural. Because of the ruggedness and remoteness of the area, the units receive little use, as evidenced by the natural revegetation that is occurring.

Outstanding Opportunities

Solitude

In spite of the lack of vegetative screening, the rugged topography, including numerous canyons, provides outstanding

opportunities for solitude. This remote area is not a high priority destination for the population of Salt Lake City or surrounding communities, so the area receives little visitor use, adding to the opportunity to find solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation exist in the units. Recreational activities include hiking, camping, rockhounding, photography, horseback riding, hunting, and sightseeing. The units lack water, so activities are limited in duration. Ridge tops and upper reaches of the units provide panoramic vistas overlooking the expanse of the Great Salt Lake Desert and nearby mountain ranges.

Supplemental Values

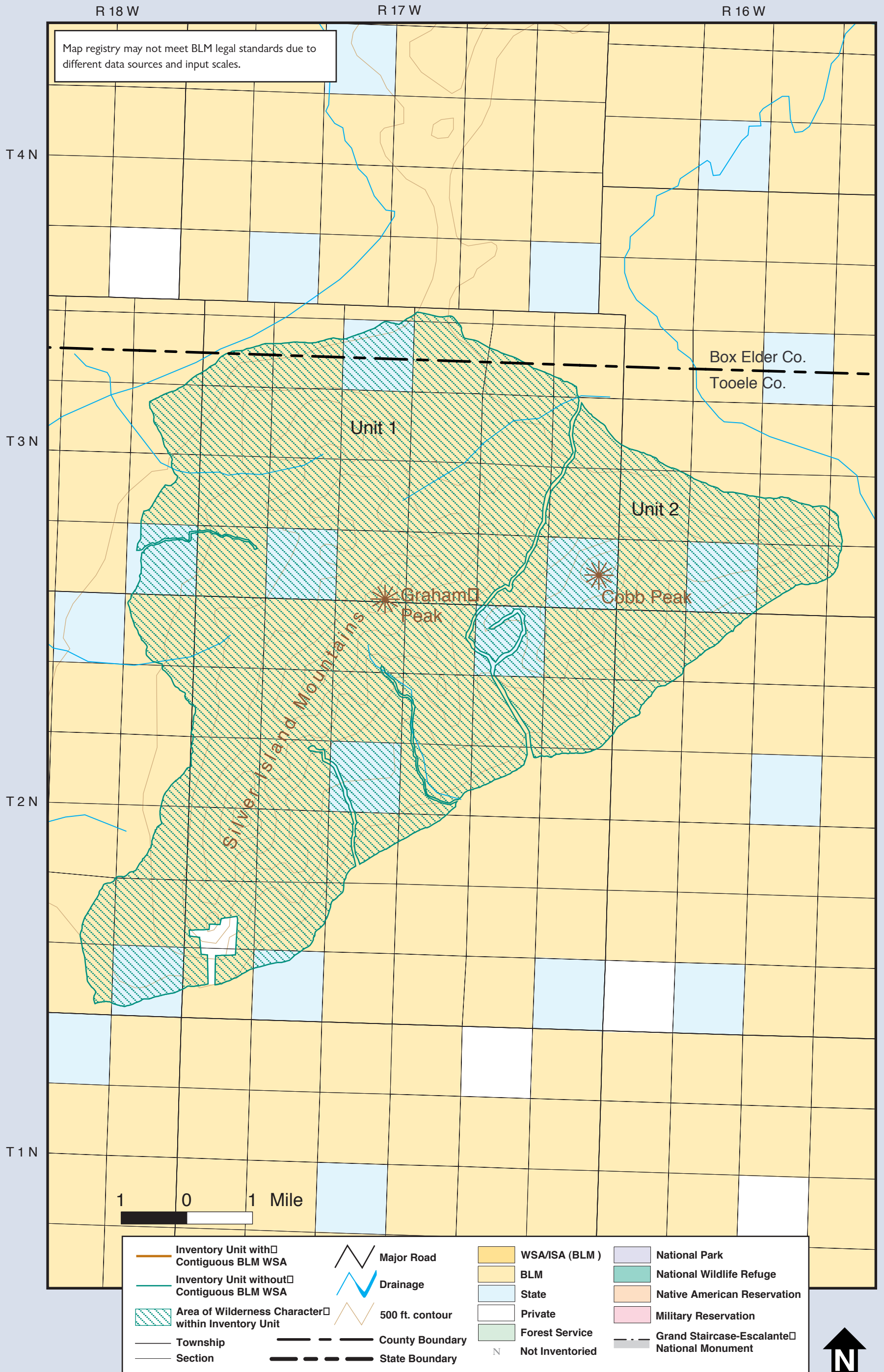
In the distant past, the Silver Island Mountains were washed by wave action from ancient Lake Bonneville. Now rockhounds are drawn to the prominent wave-cut terraces and the shoreline deposits of tufa. A veneer of Pleistocene sediments tell the area's geologic story. The units are rich in archaeological resources as well; several caves once served as habitation sites for prehistoric people. Silver Island also played a role in the more recent mining history of the region and stood as both barrier and sentinel to the pioneers who dared cross the inhospitable Salt Lake Desert. Donner Canyon in the northeast end of Unit 1 bears the name of the well-known Donner-Reed party that passed just north of the area on the historic Hastings Cutoff Trail on their way to California. The Silver Island Mountains National Back Country Byway encircles the units.



SILVER ISLAND MOUNTAINS—Surrounded by the Great Salt Lake Desert, these units provide ample opportunities to find solitude and seclusion from other visitors.

Jerry Sintz

Silver Island Mountains



NORTHWEST REGION—Silver Island Mountains