

## Wilderness

The Paiute and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Areas are special places where nature comes first and humans are just visitors. The early settlers in this region rarely entered these areas because of their wild and rugged nature. Today, visitors enjoy the opportunities for solitude and unconfined, non-mechanized recreation.

The Paiute Wilderness, located in northwestern Arizona, contains 84,700 acres. The Virgin Mountains dominate the Paiute, producing a wide range of climatic zones and ecological communities.

The 19,600-acre Beaver Dam Mountains wilderness lies in northwestern Arizona and southwestern Utah. The Beaver Dam Mountains make up the major portion of this wilderness area.

Elevation in the areas extend from 2,000 feet (610m) to 8,000 feet (2,440m) above sea level.

## Features

The Paiute and Beaver Dam are noted for outstanding scenery, geology, natural diversity and recreational opportunities.

A wide range of ecological communities exists in the two areas. The Mohave Desert with creosote and Joshua trees is at the lower elevations. Chaparral and pinyon-juniper woodlands are found a little higher on the slopes. On the highest peaks and ridges are Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir stands. A population of mule deer inhabit the Virgin Mountains around Black Rock Mountain. Desert bighorn sheep, recently re-introduced, are doing well along the rugged Virgin River Gorge. The threatened desert tortoise lives near alluvial fans and dry washes below the mountains. Small mammals, Gambel's quail, various raptors, other birds and the Gila monster, America's only poisonous lizard also live here.

Throughout the wildernesses you can observe this region's unique geology. The Virgin Mountains exhibit extreme faulting and folding actions.

The Virgin River Gorge along Interstate 15 displays 500 million years of geologic history. Tilted layers of sandstone and limestone form vertical cliffs and rugged side canyons.

Recreationists enjoy sightseeing, hiking and backpacking, photography, hunting, technical rockclimbing and river running during certain times of the year.

## Access

Travel in the wilderness areas is on foot or horseback only. Motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment are prohibited. Permits are not required for non-commercial hiking, horse packing or overnight trips.

Portions of both wilderness areas may be seen from your vehicle while traveling on Interstate 15 through the Virgin River Gorge. Interstate 15 provides the boundary line between the two areas. Black Rock Road provides access to the higher country of the Paiute. This road is "cherry-stemmed" through the wilderness meaning that it traverses but is not part of it. The road may be reached from St. George Utah, or Mesquite, Nevada.

BLM's Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area, off of Interstate 15, provides an excellent base camp for wilderness hikers. From the recreation area, the Paiute Wilderness Area is to the south across the Virgin River. To the north lies the Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Area. Cedar Pockets Road begins across the highway from the recreation area and is cherry-stemmed through the Beaver Dam

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Access to the rugged interior of the two wilderness areas is by primitive trails beginning

from dirt roads that surround the areas (see map on reverse). Trailheads for the Paiute area at Cougar Springs on Black Rock Road and the Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area. Other access points occur along the boundary roads of both areas.

## Leave No Trace

People enter wilderness to escape civilization and commune with nature. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requires your help as a wilderness visitor to maintain an untrammeled setting and preserve the wilderness characteristics.

## For Your Safety

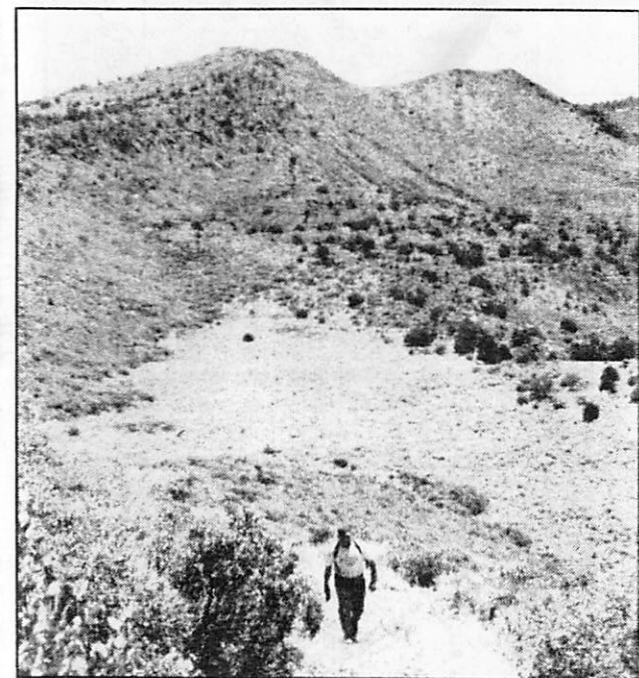
- Water is scarce in the desert environment so bring plenty of your own. Purify any water found in the backcountry before drinking.
- Summers are hot! Avoid being out in the hottest part of the day. Spring and Fall are the best times to hike these areas. Nights can be quite cold.
- Elevation changes can produce large temperature differences.
- Interstate-15 is the only paved road. Check with the BLM office for current conditions of other roads and weather before your trip.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Watch for rattlesnakes.
- Thunderstorms can bring lightning and flash floods.
- Do not attempt to cross the Virgin River during high water or after heavy rain storms in southwest Utah.

**For More Information:**  
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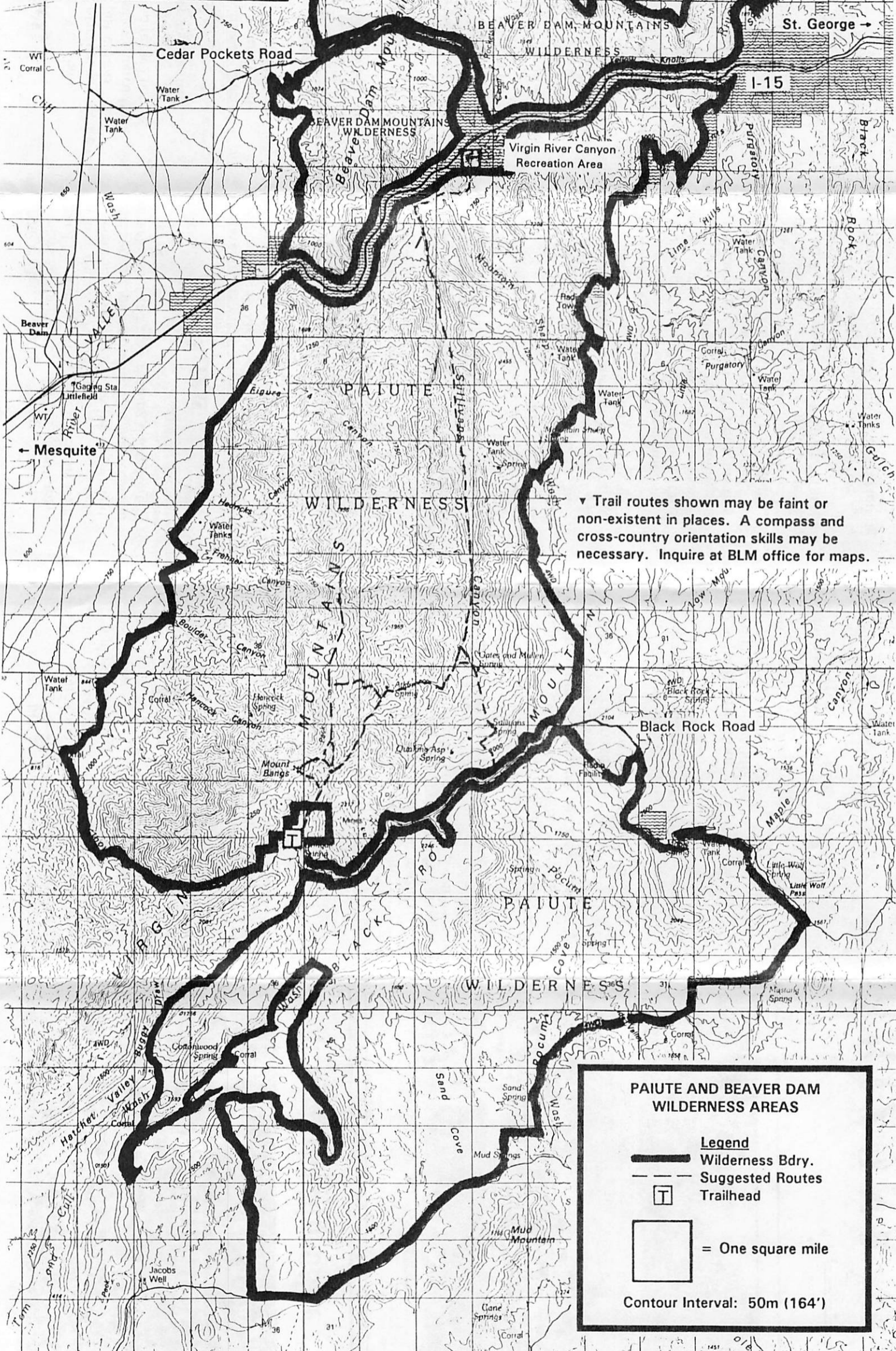


## Arizona Strip Field Office



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▼ Trail routes shown may be faint or non-existent in places. A compass and cross-country orientation skills may be necessary. Inquire at BLM office for maps.