

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Conduct analysis of different types of maps
- Discuss the difficulties faced by homesteaders moving across the state
- Describe how homesteaders modified the land around them
- Explain why it is important to preserve historic sites
- Find information from primary sources including documents, and newspaper articles about life as a homesteader

Connection to Colorado Social Studies Standards:

- 2nd grade: 1.1.a, 1.1.b, 1.1.d, 2.1.a, 2.1.b, 2.2.c, 2.2.d
- 3rd grade: 1.1.b, 1.1.c, 1.2.a, 1.2.b, 2.1.a, 2.1.d, 2.2.a, 2.2.d
- 4th grade: 1.1.a, 1.2.d, 2.1b, 2.1.d, 2.2.d, 2.2.b, 2.2.c

Materials: Map Analysis PowerPoint presentation*, Land Resources PowerPoint*, Farm Implements PowerPoint*, map observation tool, Bill Rambo Daily Sentinel Interview, arrow post it notes

*the PowerPoint files have been converted to .pdf for the website, please contact the Museums of Western Colorado Education Department for the PowerPoint files if preferred

Time: 1-2 class periods

Background

Rambo Family Homestead

In the year 1911 a man named, William H. Rambo was granted a homestead patent on a piece of land in an area known today as the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. Rambo, his wife Charlotte, and their children lived in a small cabin they built on the land. The family carved out a life in this remote side canyon utilizing the natural resources that were available. A nearby creek, and fertile soil enriched by the shape of intersecting drainages in the valley permitted the Rambo family to maintain a small fruit orchard and a few crops to sustain their livelihood.

Nearby access to water was essential, but it wasn't enough to sustain the whole family year-round. The family had to devise a way to bring the water to them. To solve this problem, the Rambo family installed an irrigation ditch system that would allow the transportation of water throughout the property for agricultural and household purposes.

The Rambo family, in time, constructed a makeshift road, allowing access from their canyon homestead to nearby towns like Bridgeport, Grand Junction and Delta. With a path cleared, the family was able to deliver goods and tools essential for cultivating the land and integrating life into the harsh desert landscape.

Some of the farming implements that were brought into the homestead can still be found today on the historic property. In 1987, Bill Rambo – son of William Rambo, sold his property to the Bureau of Land Management under a guarantee that his property would be incorporated into the wilderness area that now surrounds his childhood home. In 2009 Dominguez Canyon and Escalante Canyons were officially recognized as just that. Wilderness areas are some of the most highly protected public lands in the nation, and they serve to fortify the Nation's most pristine undeveloped lands. Billy Rambo retired to his childhood cabin in 1975 and stayed there until his recent passing. After Bill's death in 2015, the Grand Junction BLM field office took over management of this special piece of local heritage site. The location of the cabin is undisclosed but lies within the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.

Suggested Procedure:

1. Use the Map Activity PowerPoint (attached here as part of this .pdf) to show students different types of maps.
 - a. Political map of the U.S. with state boundaries
 - b. 1862 map – this highlights which areas were territories, and which were states
 - c. Satellite view of the U.S. emphasizing terrain
 - d. Colorado – emphasize terrain
 - e. Western ColoradoChoose any of the above maps to complete a map analysis using the Library of Congress observation tool as a whole class – chart student responses
2. Using Google Earth to display a relief map of Colorado, discuss with students what challenges they might face if they moved across the plains and Rocky Mountains with their families.
 - a. Locate Grand Junction on the map and point out its proximity to natural features like mountains and rivers.
 - b. Ask Students – What natural features or resources might influence a migrating settler's decision to choose a homestead site?
 - c. What challenges might they meet physically or mentally?
 - d. What questions would students have for other pioneer kids?
3. Tell students that your class is going on a virtual hike with an archaeologist. Ask students to list ways that hikers should behave when on the trail – guide them towards Leave No Trace Principles (respect wildlife, leave what you find, use your eyes not your hands, be considerate of other visitors etc.)

Teachers will click through a Google Earth tour – a photo story-map that documents and interprets a hiking trail through Big Dominguez Canyon. Along the trail, visitors to the wilderness area will encounter several examples of historic and pre-historic cultural resource areas, ending at the Rambo Family homestead.

- a. Follow the link to the presentation provided here (works best with the Google Chrome browser):
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ytFDAXIxcaA5tuoxZDkAOJxU7oF-BpRI&usp=sharing>
- b. Please click through the images and use the narrated slides on the sides of the images to lead students on a trip through the canyon

4. Tell the story of the Rambo family homestead (see summary above)
5. Use the Land Resources PPT (attached here as a .pdf) to answer the following questions with students: Guide questioning to discuss human relationship with the natural world.
 - » How did the Rambo family survive in this challenging landscape? What did they need? (food, water, shelter)
 - » What technologies did the family use to access natural resources: irrigation, ditches, tools for cultivating the land, and fence making.
 - » What living or non-living things did the Rambo family interrelate with in order to survive?
 - » How did the Rambo family modify the landscape to survive?
6. Project the Google Earth close up of Dominguez Canyon and examine as a whole class. Use the map analysis tool from the library of congress to guide student understanding of the source chart their responses. Guide student learning towards understanding what role resource availability plays in the selection of a homestead.
 - » Identify and define geographic land forms (canyon, river, drainage, creek, trees, rock, North, South, East, West) and explain the map legend.
7. Students will study map independently and determine where they might choose to settle, or build a homestead based on resource availability. Have students place a post-it arrow to identify where they would live.
8. Students present and justify their homestead selection to their classmates (where they chose and why) in a large class discussion. Their recommendations are recorded by teacher. (water access, natural shelter, wind protection, vegetation, clearing)
9. Show images of tools on PowerPoint slides (Implements PPT, attached here as a pdf) that were used to integrate life on the land through technology.
 - » Students can make inferences about how these tools were used
10. Teacher guides class to answer the question: Should historic sites like the Rambo homestead be preserved and why or why not?

Extension: After students have selected a homesteading site via Google Earth, they can write a story about life on their chosen homestead.

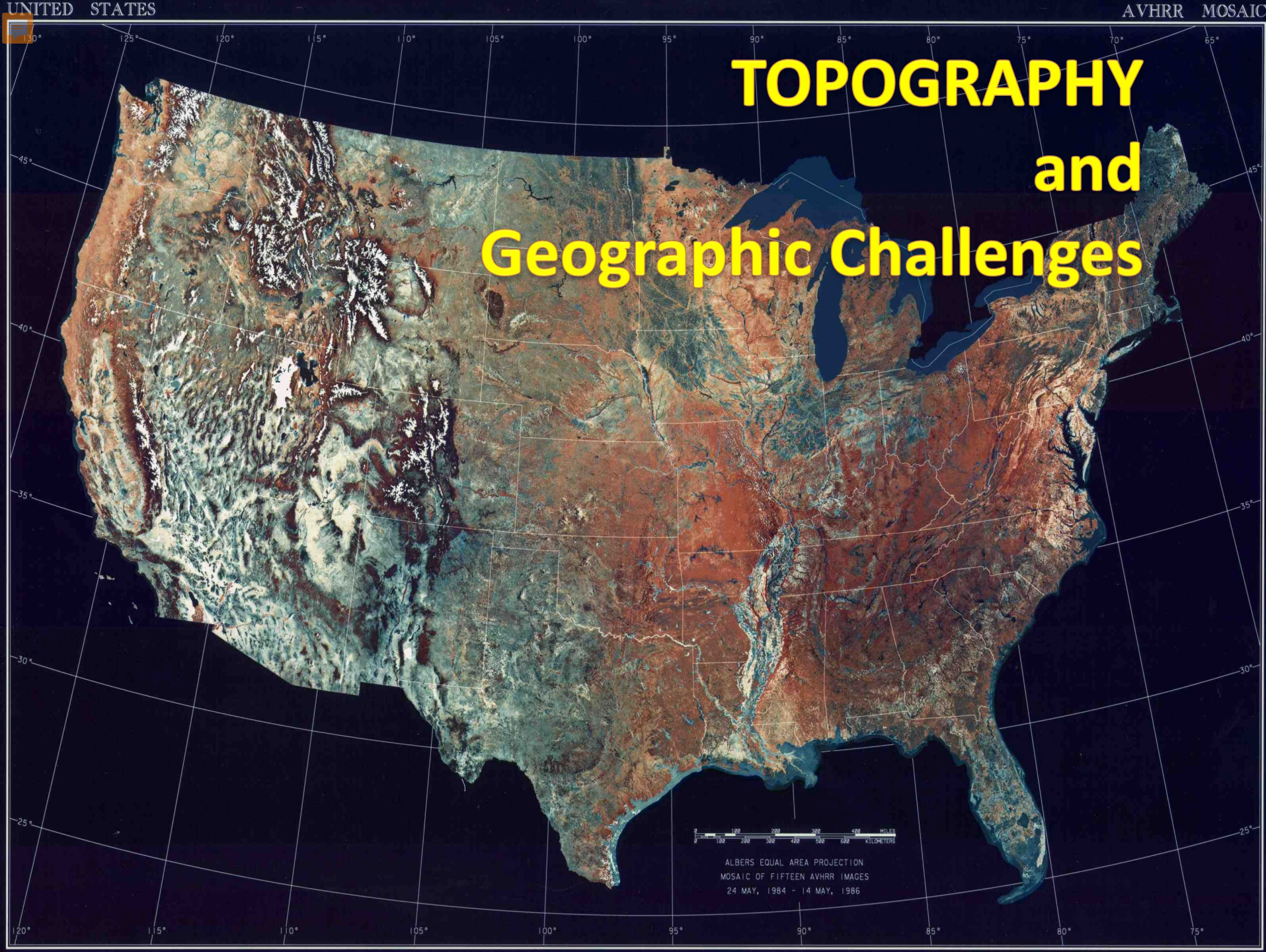
Extension: Use the original homestead land patent documents. This primary resource can be used with an observation tool to investigate what homesteaders had to do in order to claim land from public domain during the Homestead Act.

Extension: Use the 1989 Rambo interview from the Daily Sentinel as a primary source. This interview can be used with an observation tool to learn about the Rambo homestead.

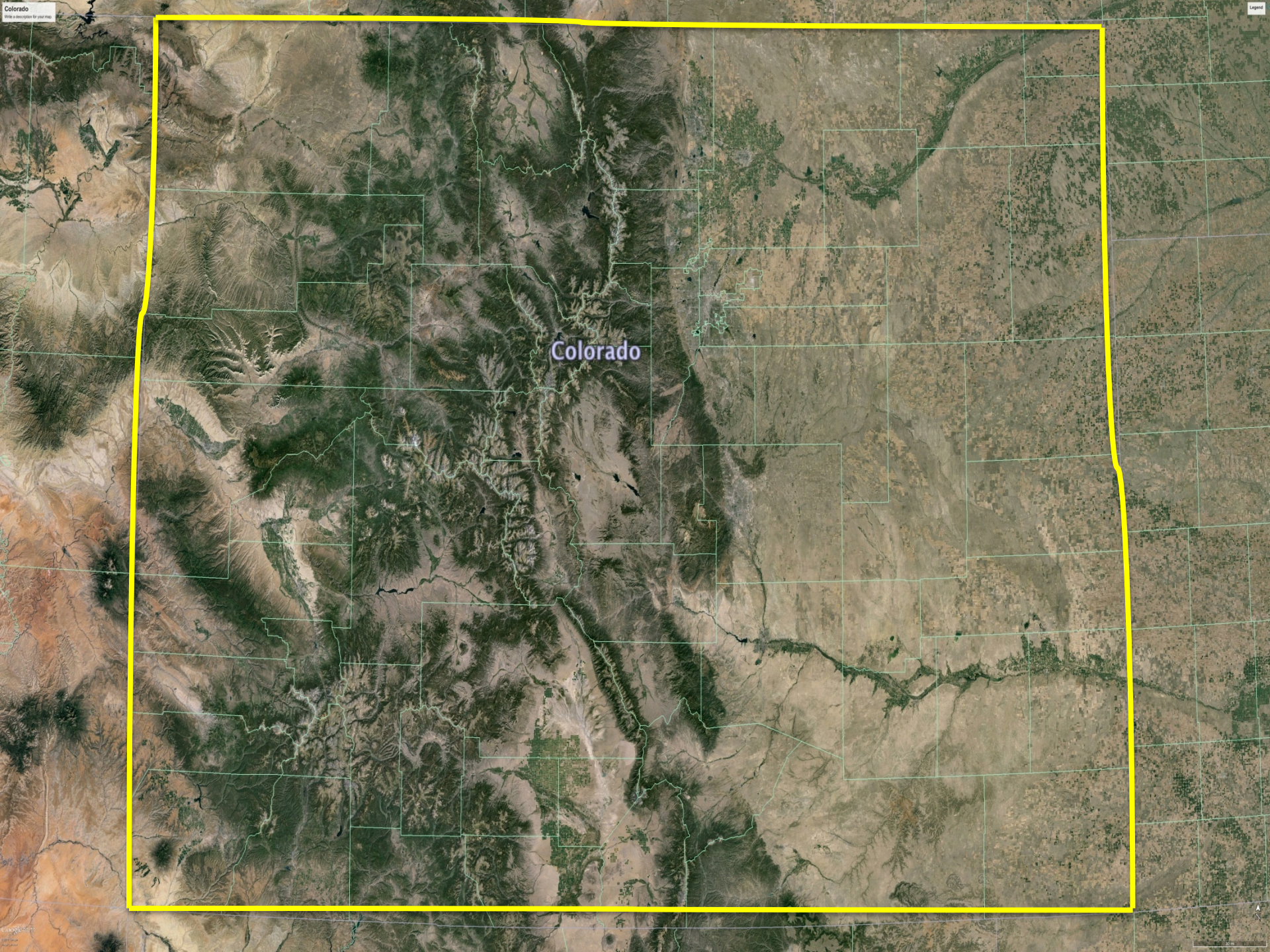




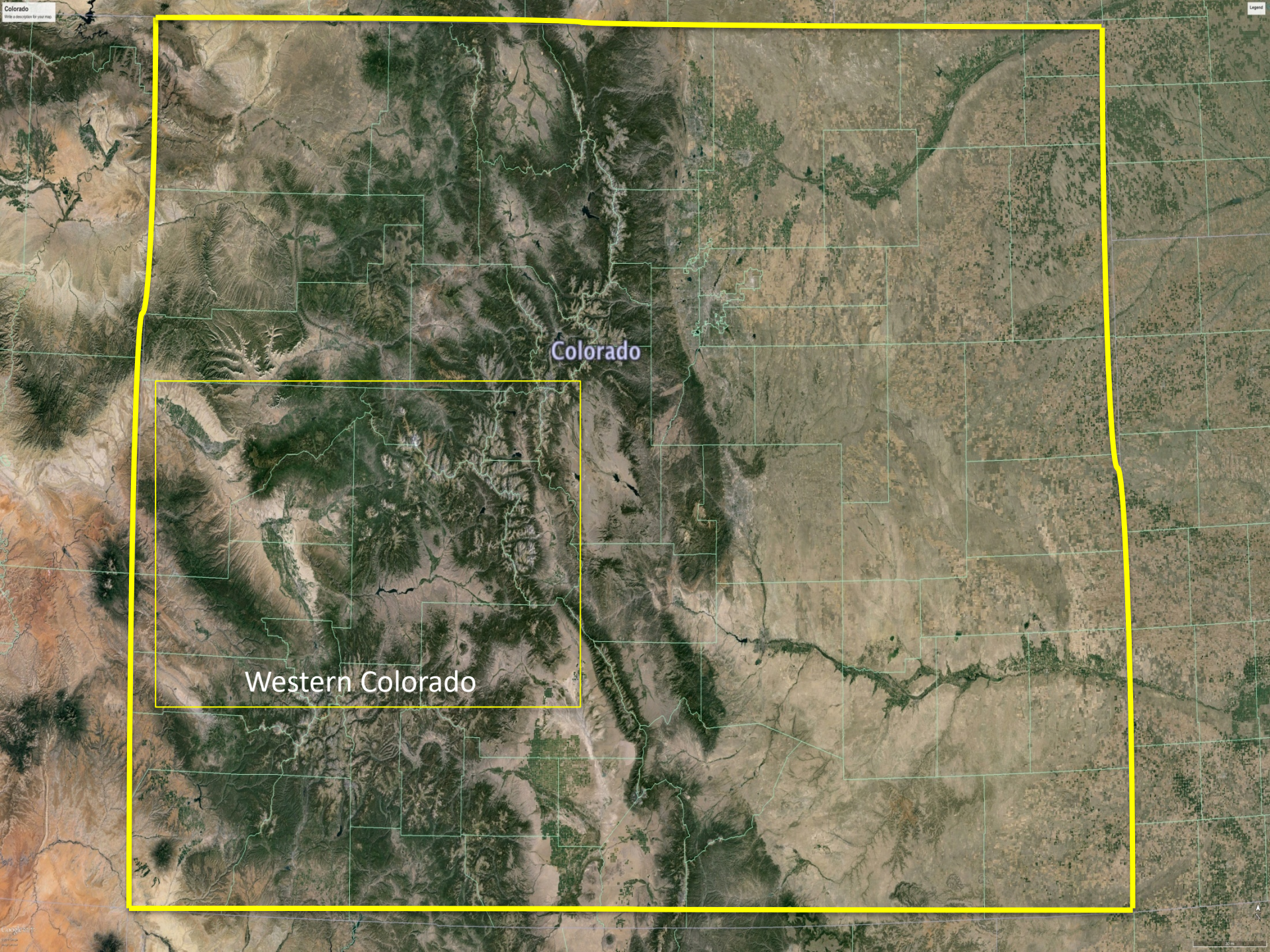
TOPOGRAPHY and Geographic Challenges







Colorado



Colorado

Western Colorado



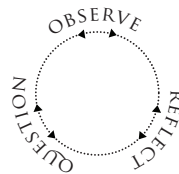
Grand Junction Valley

Colorado River

Gunnison River

Delta

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING MAPS



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.**

OBSERVE

Ask students to identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see. • What do you notice first?
• What size and shape is the map? • What graphical elements do you see? • What on the map looks strange or unfamiliar? • Describe anything that looks like it does not belong on a map. • What place or places does the map show? • What, if any, words do you see?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Why do you think this map was made? • Who do you think the audience was for this map? • How do you think this map was made? • How does it compare to current maps of this place? • What does this map tell you about what the people who made it knew and what they didn't? • If this map was made today, what would be different? • What would be the same?

QUESTION

Invite students to ask questions that lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? • what? • when? • where? • why? • how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning

Have students write a brief description of the map in their own words.

Intermediate

Study three or more maps of a city or state at different time periods. Arrange them in chronological order. Discuss clues to the correct sequence.

Advanced

Search for maps of a city or state from different time periods, then compile a list of changes over time and other differences and similarities between the maps.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov.teachers>

Gunnison River

The Gunnison river cuts through the surrounding Uncompahgre plateau. A valley created by the erosional forces of the river is the terminus for drainages throughout this region. Waterways like Big and Little Dominguez Creeks flow into the Gunnison.

Water is the ultimate resource in the desert. Life has thrived in these canyons for thousands of years, primarily because of this unique source of water availability.



Big and Little Dominguez Creeks

Two creeks act as primary drainages and have carved deep side canyons along the Gunnison river corridor. These creeks have provided sustenance for humans that have used this thriving corridor for thousands of years.

Sheltered areas near this lifeline would have been premium locations for historic and prehistoric occupation of these canyons.



Irrigation Ditch

Irrigation ditches were used to integrate homesteading into Dominguez Canyons. Ditches were dug to direct run-off and access nearby creeks.

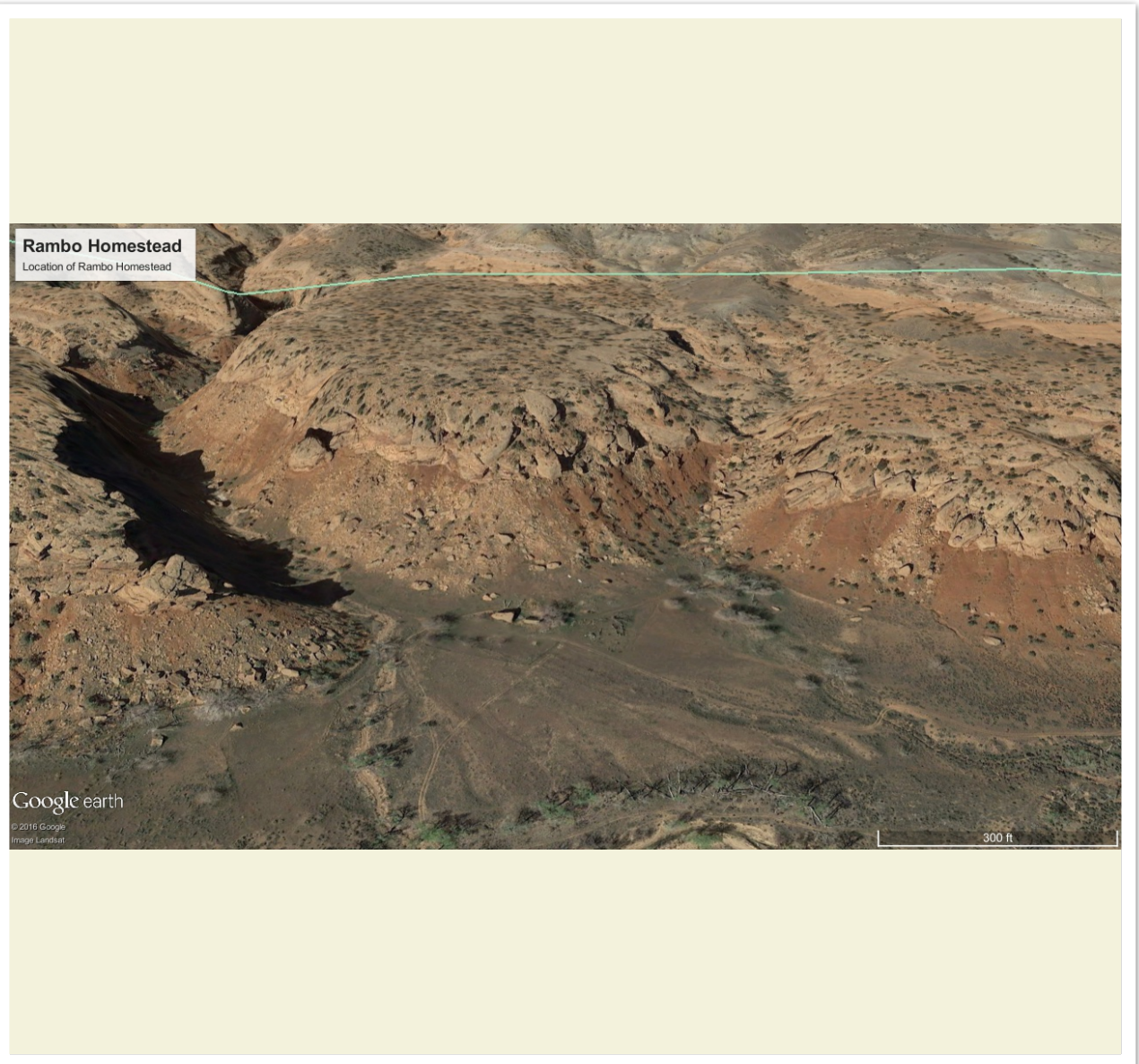
Here a BLM archaeologist measures the depth and width of an irrigation ditch dug at the Rambo Homestead.



Geography of a Homestead

The Rambo homestead, built in 1903, stands today inside of Dominguez Canyons Wilderness Areas.

The gently sloping plane of land would have offered space for crop development. The creek running nearby would have allowed the family to survive and keep livestock. The canyon itself would have provided protection from high winds, freezing drafts and extreme sun exposure. The property is located at the mouth of a side canyon. This could have encouraged greater catchment of run-off using irrigation ditches dug near the inlet.



Location of Rambo Homestead



Google earth

© 2016 Google
Image Landsat

300 ft

Landscape Features

This large rock formation might have provided additional protection and shade in the canyon.



Growing Shade near Cabin

This angle shows how shade grows near the cabin itself. This could have influenced Rambo's choice in where to build.



Planting and Seeding machine

A farmer would sit on the seat between the wheels and work a hand lever – dropping seeds as the machine plowed through fields and created rows for crop growing.



Rake

The dump rake was widely used in hayfield harvesting operations. It was light, easy to operate, inexpensive, and can be used almost anywhere a horse can be driven.

Rakes like this were used to churn up, dry-out and harvest alfalfa hay on the Rambo homestead. Hay is a legume that is primarily used for livestock feed and forage.



Wagon

A wagon serves a homestead family in a variety of ways. Mostly wagons would have been used for transporting goods and equipment.

The Rambo family constructed a road between their homestead and the corridor to Bridgeport. They probably used this wagon to transport items for sale and trade in town.



Mower

This is a vertical lift mower. It was an important tool for harvesting hay along rough and uneven rocky land surfaces. The sickle bar – or blade – was stored in an upright position. It could be dropped and lowered using a hand lever without stopping the animal team drawing the apparatus. This would have made mowing in a rocky canyon much more efficient for the Rambos.



Free spirit

Bill Rambo likes solitary living deep in canyon

Heather McGregor
Daily Sentinel

Twice now this year, Bill Rambo has driven the 25 miles to Delta for supplies, mail, a haircut and his Scientific American magazines.

DOMINGUEZ CANYON — Bill Rambo opens the back hatch of his 1967 Volkswagen bus, parked between his weathered log cabin and a goat-trampled fence, to lay out his four-dimensional chess board.

Living alone between the deep red sandstone walls of Dominguez Canyon these past 15 years, Rambo, 63, has all the time in the world to watch bighorn sheep, daydream and invent things.

"I just chase one will-o'-the-wisp after another," he said.

He lives here in an 85-year-old log cabin in the middle of wilderness, his childhood home three miles up the rugged slickrock canyon from the Gunnison River.

His companions are a black-and-white dog named Jiggie, a ragged, 15-year-old tomcat and 26 goats with names like Saint Annie, Iris and Harmony.

Milking them at dawn and dusk and slaughtering one or two in the winter — a task he hates — Rambo depends on the goats to provide his main source of food.

He also dries apricots, and takes his water from the creek. He got sick from it once, years ago, and figures he's immune now.

"I've had hikers here get cross with me because I couldn't give them any water. They couldn't believe I got my water from the creek," he said.

Twice now this year, he's driven the 25 miles to Delta for supplies, mail, a haircut and his Scientific American magazines.

He goes for months without visitors. But his radio picks up National Public Radio.

Rambo savors the solitude. He said he's different from most people, and finds it tough to get along.

But the morning of our visit, he drank three cups of coffee before meeting us at the Gunnison River, and told stories long into the heat of the afternoon.

He told of his parents growing up in Ouray and Rico, and of his childhood in the canyon, moving bushel boxes of low-profit peaches, plums and apricots across the Gunnison River on a cable.

Once, when he and his mother were in the box under the cable, its mooring collapsed and they dropped to the river.

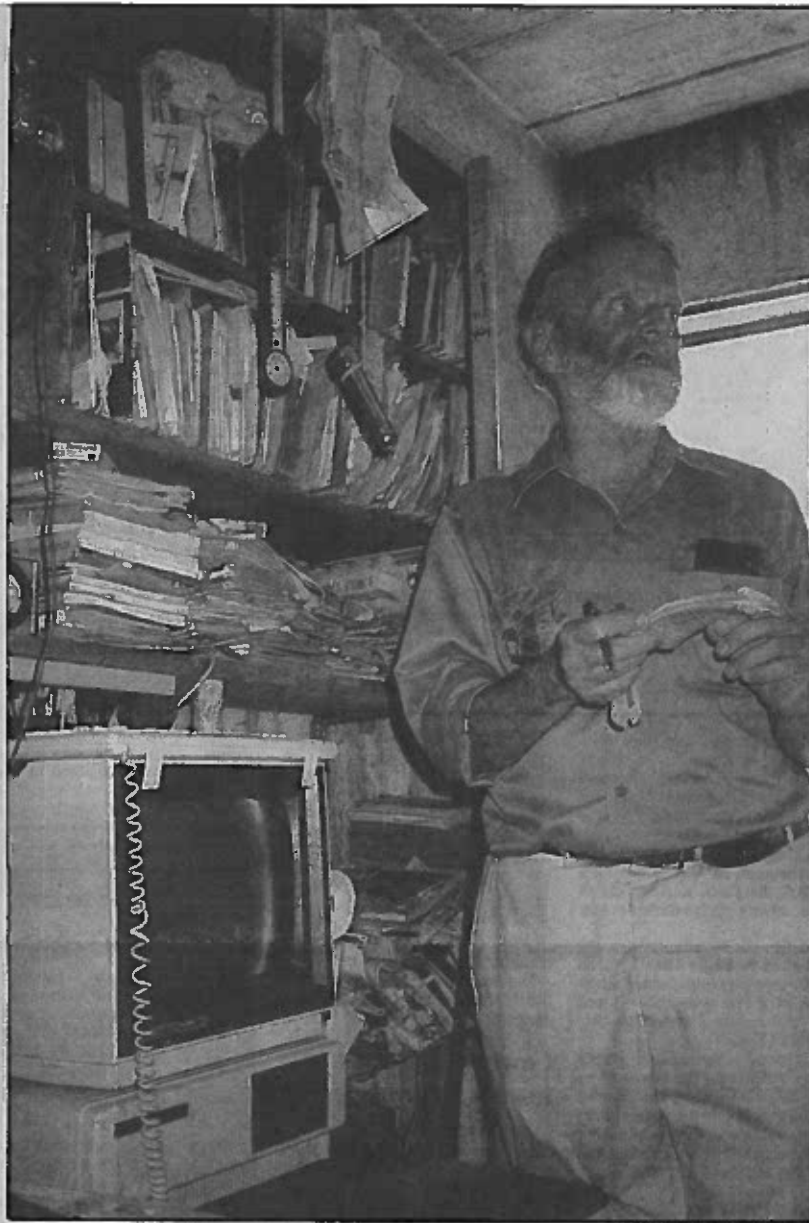
"My father rode his horse out into the river and saved us," he recalled.

He laughed hard retelling stories of his father's hilarious teasing of relatives, and wept recalling his father's death 32 years ago, during a time of harrowing high water on the river.

The fruit ranch saw its cultivated peak in the 40-some years when William and Lottie Marie Rambo irrigated the canyon bottom and shipped out tons of fruit, alfalfa and hay.

For eight years after William's death in 1938, Rambo's sister, Helen Hyde, of Paonia, and her children lived there.

Please see Rambo, page 4A



Al Gibson/Daily Sentinel

Bill Rambo spends time working complex programs on his computer. For long programs he has to get up during the night and refuel the generator that powers the computer.

Rambo

From Page One

dren kept the place irrigated. Since then, the surrounding desert wilderness has crept in, slowly reclaiming the homestead, bringing dust and drought, sun and wind to fray and wither the lush ranch.

Rambo retired here in 1975 after a difficult civil-engineering career at Wright-Patterson Field near Dayton, Ohio.

He said he was "the troublesome type," a whistleblower of the 1950s and 60s who lacked today's protections and was transferred away from controversies.

But it was the Vietnam War that led him to resign in 1967.

"I felt that what little I was doing toward that effort wasn't a good contribution to human interest. I'm pretty convinced that was a terrible business, just like what we're doing now in Central America," said Rambo.

He spent a few years in New Mexico and Denver, working different jobs, and in Paonia at his sister's home, caring for his ailing mother.

When she passed away, Rambo moved back to Dominguez for good.

It's home, and it's in the middle of wild land that Rambo-Rambo

Last fall Bill Rambo sold his land to the federal government for \$55,750, with a lifetime lease allowing him to stay until he dies. He wanted the Bureau of Land Management to promise the land would become wilderness after he dies.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

BLM officials, like Grand Junction resource area manager John Singlaub, worried that Rambo's 320-acre fruit ranch could spell trouble for the surrounding 73,500-acre Dominguez Canyon wilderness.

They feared the land would be subdivided and sold, requiring a road into the area and bringing people and vehicles into this now hard-to-reach area.

With the condemnation of Bridgeport Bridge, public access to the canyon is by boat or a long walk or ride in from high on the Uncompahgre Plateau.

Rambo shared the BLM's fears, and so he did something unusual. Last fall, he sold his land to the federal government for \$55,750, with a lifetime lease allowing him to stay until he dies.

He wanted Singlaub to promise the land would become wilderness

something about the wilderness that's soothing. You just don't find that in settled areas."

He approves of wilderness hiking and horseback riding, recreation that he says "is not tied to a motor boat or golf clubs."

"I'd probably want to set aside all of western Colorado if I had my way," he said.

But he's not the type of person to leave his desert retreat to push for such things.

His time is spent caring for the goats and pursuing complex mathematical and engineering ideas, like four-dimensional chess, an electronic reading device for blind people and long programs on his computer.

He powers the computer with a generator, and when he's running a long program, he has to get up in the night to refuel it.

And he'd like to figure out an in-



Al Gibson/Daily Sentinel

Set beneath the towering cliffs of Dominguez Canyon, Bill Rambo's house is an 85-year-old log cabin, which carries out the simple life style he lives.

trolled, he said, could we build an intelligence test into the trap?

That way, he said, "Only the dummies are trapped and harvest-

Bill Rambo spent years thinking for society. Now he thinks for himself.

"You've heard the statement