

Bodie

CA-010-100

BODIE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-010-100)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 16,814 acres

The Bodie Wilderness Study area is located in northeastern Mono County, approximately nine miles east of Bridgeport, California. The WSA includes 16,482 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, 332 acres of private inholdings, and no State land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

A review of the map reveals a WSA configuration that is irregular and convoluted. The northern boundary begins on the Toiyabe National Forest border and proceeds in an easterly direction along the Halfway Camp Road and private land. The boundary turns south at the Mono County line and then irregularly follows Bodie Road and private land. The boundary generally turns west along Bodie Road and continues along the road bypassing Bodie State Historic Park until it reaches Geiger Grade. The boundary heads north along the Geiger Grade, private land, and the road to Halfway Camp before it returns to the edge of the Toiyabe National Forest.

The WSA occupies the northeastern quarter of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills lie on the western margin of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, adjacent to and slightly within the eastern periphery of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. The unit is dominated by rocky, rounded, volcanic hills ranging in elevation from 7,600 feet to 9,200 feet. Undoubtedly the most scenic portion of the Bodie Hills, this unit provides a variety of landform features that are visually outstanding. Several perennial creeks have carved deep and narrow canyons in the western two-thirds of the unit. The Atastra and Rough Creek drainages provide spectacular and striking scenery of meandering creeks in abrupt and colorful canyons. Several spring sources and associated wetland habitats can be found in the area adding additional scenic variety. The Dry Lakes plateau dominated by the 9,000-foot cinder cone, Beauty Peak, occupies the northeastern portion of the WSA. Beauty Peak and the surrounding plateau contrast sharply with the subdued relief of surrounding terrain, particularly during twilight hours. Vegetation in the unit includes common Great Basin shrubs with pinyon-juniper associations on upland slopes and canyon walls. Quaking aspen and willows line drainages with permanent water sources. The unit also provides wetland habitat for a diverse range of wildlife.

Varied topography, wetland values, and a highly primitive environment combine together to make this portion of the Bodie Hills the most scenic in the area.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness Study Areas. A summary of the area's wilderness values was included in the Final EIS. Three different

suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EISs: all wilderness, partial wilderness recommending approximately 41% of the area suitable, and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —
- | | |
|--------|---|
| | 0 acres recommended
for wilderness |
| 16,482 | BLM acres recommended
for non-wilderness |

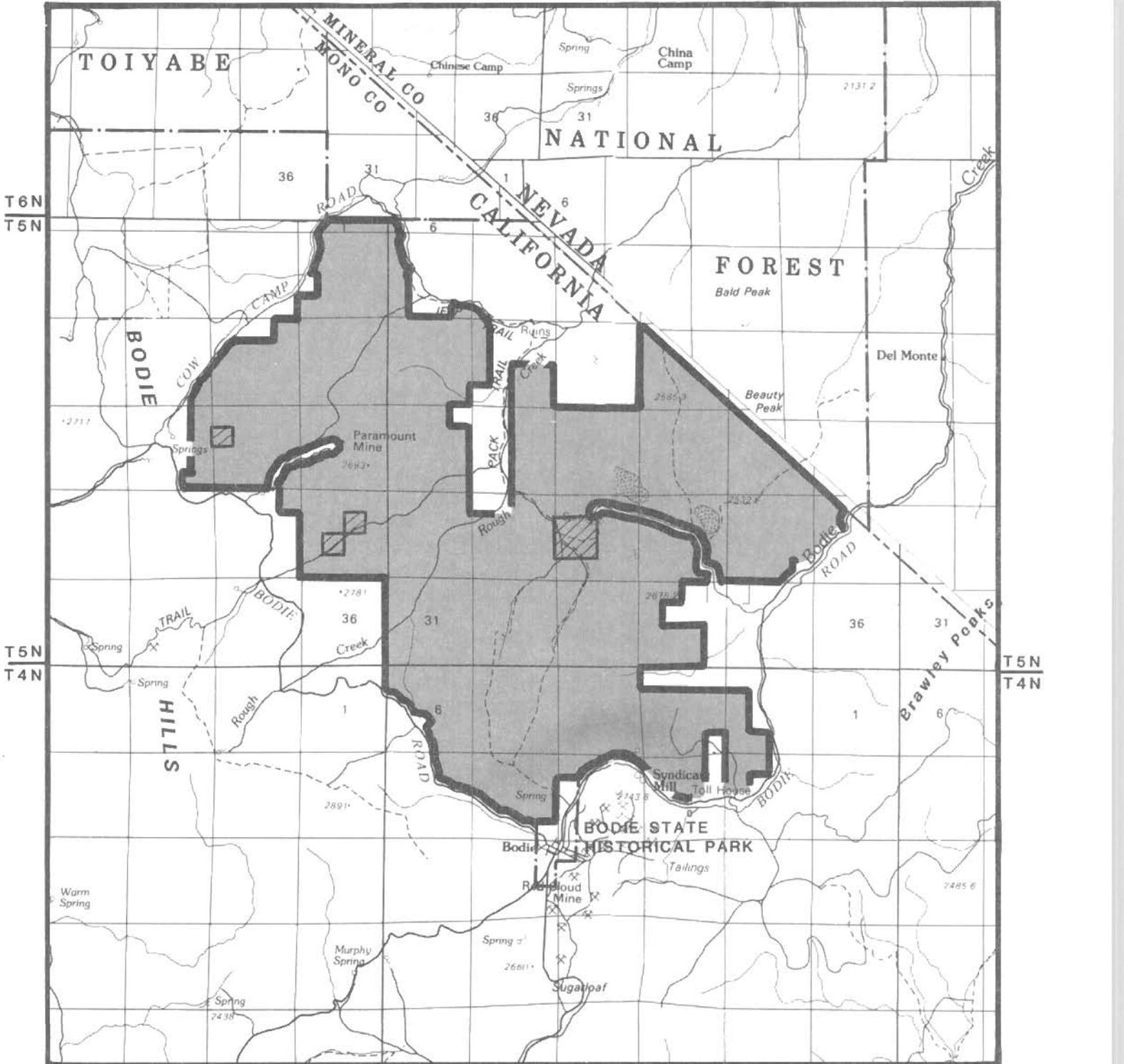
No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. The all-wilderness alternative is considered to be the environmentally preferred alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The no-wilderness alternative will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The WSA is recommended nonsuitable because its potential for mineral occurrence and motorized recreation needs outweigh the area's wilderness values. Manageability was a secondary consideration in the nonsuitable recommendation.

The major resource conflict in the WSA is the area's high potential for mineral occurrence. The unit contains several hundred mining claims and most of the WSA contains moderate to high metallic mineral potential. Development of mining claims which are found to have valid existing rights could impair the area's wilderness values with or without wilderness designation. Mineral exploration activity has occurred in the Paramount Mine area and in the Beauty Peak/Dry Lakes Plateau. There is moderate to high potential for determination of valid existing rights on mining claims associated with the moderate to high metallic mineral potential. Moderate potential exists for geothermal resources; the western portion of the WSA contains pending geothermal lease applications.

The WSA sustains and provides opportunities for motorized recreation. Approximately 18 miles of primitive vehicle routes are located in the WSA. The WSA is used by local snowmobilers during winter months. Hunters, rockhounds, and sightseers use these primitive vehicle routes during non-winter months. Additionally, the Modesto Ridgerunners use these routes for their annual four-wheel drive poker rally/sightseeing event. It is expected that demand and use of this area for motorized recreational activities will continue.

Manageability was a tertiary factor in the nonsuitable recommendation. The primary manageability limitation consists of the highly irregular configuration of the WSA as well as two cherrystemmed roads leading to private lands and mining claims. Finally, the moderate to high potential for determination of valid existing rights associated with mineral claims in moderate to high metallic mineral areas may completely impede wilderness manageability.



- | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|--------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



Bodie Proposal
MAP-1



010-100
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	16,482
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		332
Total		<u>16,814</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Study Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	16,482
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>16,482</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The unit has retained its overall primeval character and influence with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The western two-thirds of the unit consists of rocky, steep volcanic hills reaching summits of 9,200 feet. This area has been incised by several perennial creeks which have exposed colorful and dramatic rock formations. Rough Creek drainage is especially scenic. Atastra Creek, Milk Ranch Canyon, and Halfway Camp also add striking scenic value to the unit.

The eastern third of the WSA is dominated by the Beauty Peak/Dry Lakes plateau. Beauty Peak, a volcanic cinder cone, rises abruptly (9,018 feet) above the broad tabular Dry Lakes area providing a different landform feature to the WSA. Only the southwestern aspect of Beauty Peak lies within the WSA.

Most of the bottomlands and sideslopes are covered by big sagebrush, bitterbrush, and perennial grasses. Plant density is high. Low sage is found on the ridges and as interspersed islands within the sagebrush, displaying a mottled appearance. There are dry and wet meadows in major drainages and around springs. The western slope of Rough Creek and the dry rocky ridges support stands of pinyon-juniper. The deep drainages have numerous stands of aspen.

Unnatural features are visible on a local basis, but are small in magnitude in relation to the unit's size and topographic diversity. Unimproved, primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 18 miles are in the area. A cherrystemmed road leading to Paramount Mine exists in the western portion of the WSA. Some old mining prospects and associated surface disturbances dot this area. A few wildlife enclosures sit along the western edge of the WSA near Geiger Grade Road. Several miles of fence traverse the unit.

The variety of geology, aesthetic values, wetland values, and a rugged natural environment are contributing factors which make this WSA the most scenic in the Bodie Hills.

2. Solitude: The unit's varied terrain, extensive size, and vegetative diversity cumulatively provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The deep canyons of Atastra Creek, Rough Creek and others enhance opportunities to get away from it all. The rugged and primeval nature of Beauty Peak and the Dry Lakes plateau heightens a visitor's feeling of desolation.

This WSA may be overflowed in the future by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission during approved military operations. The visual intrusions and associated noise create temporary effects on solitude which are deemed acceptable and necessary as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and unconfined recreation: The area contains abundant opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Bodie Hills are reputedly known for their sage grouse hunting; this area of the Bodie Hills is one of the most popular. Hunters from all areas of California and portions of western Nevada hunt the area during open season. In addition, the area provides visitors with opportunities for camping, historical sightseeing, geological sightseeing, wildlife study, backpacking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. The WSA is also quite popular with rockhounds.
4. Special features: The WSA is known for its diversity of wildlife. Sage grouse, a recovering species of game birds that has been historically over-harvested; mule deer and pronghorn antelope are

all wildlife species which rely on this intact natural environment for their forage and cover. The unit serves as crucial nesting habitat for sage grouse as well as crucial habitat for deer and pronghorn fawning.

The unit contains a presence of Astragalus johannis-howellii (State-listed "rare"), and Phacelia monoensis, which is on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species list. Two major populations of Astragalus johannis-howellii exist with plants numbering in the thousands. The habitat is stable. One population of Phacelia monoensis exists. The population consists of sixty plants. The stability of the populations is unknown. In addition, a unique sphagnum peat bog is located in the unit.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 16,814 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The Bodie WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,188,793
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	204,327

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of nine major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3 - Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Chico	16	1,286,873	13	430,822
Fresno	35	4,048,852	28	460,790
Merced	33	3,957,550	25	348,753
Modesto	36	4,126,963	81	1,722,326
Sacramento	46	5,001,817	87	2,479,541
Stockton	35	4,061,833	46	601,496
Vallejo-Napa-Fairfield	44	4,832,667	74	2,100,862
Yuba City	44	4,951,805	85	2,495,500
<u>Nevada</u>				
Reno	39	4,647,230	170	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of one BLM WSA recommended for wilderness designation. The Hoover Wilderness, 25 miles to the west, is the nearest designated wilderness area. This wilderness area is administered by the Toiyabe and the Inyo National Forests. Other nearby designated wilderness areas include Yosemite National Park which is managed by the National Park Service, the Ansel Adams Wilderness is managed by the Inyo National Forest, and the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness which is managed by the Toiyabe National Forest.

C. Manageability

Although the area is manageable as wilderness, some limitations and severe encumbrances may exist. Manageability limitations consist of needed motorized access on two cherrystemmed roads (to Paramount Mine and to private land) by miners and livestock operators. An additional limitation would be the problems inherent with management of an irregularly shaped unit. The penetrating linear blocks of private land as well as the cherrystemmed roads inhibit complete and effective management as wilderness.

Finally, the WSA may be altogether unmanageable as wilderness if mining claims in areas of moderate to high metallic mineral potential (most of the WSA including the Paramount Mine area) result in determination of valid existing rights. The probability that this will occur is moderate to high. There is a dense staking of metallic mineral claims in the northern two-thirds of the WSA. The entire WSA contains approximately 356 mining claims. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive recreation experiences could be permanently impaired in these areas if the claims are found to have valid existing rights and are developed.

Some signing, patrolling, and fencing of the WSA would be required to maintain the area's natural integrity. Purchase of the penetrating blocks of private land would enhance manageability.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of information known at the time of the preliminary suitability recommendation: The Bodie WSA is within the BLM Bodie Geology - Energy - Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M data, as supplemented by the Analysis of the Management Situation (WSA File #CA-010-100 1984), is discussed in the Affected Environment section of the wilderness recommendations-Benton Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas Wilderness EIS, 1987. The EIS states that the WSA has a potential for occurrence of gold, silver, mercury, and geothermal resources. The EIS states that there is low potential for non-metallics and no potential for oil and gas. There is low potential for uranium and thorium.

The supplemented G-E-M data indicated that the northern two-thirds of the WSA has a moderate potential for metallic minerals. Within this area of moderate potential is a small area of high potential around the Paramount Mine. The WSA's extreme southern edge also has a high potential for metallics.

The Paramount Mine area is rated as having a high potential for occurrence of gold, silver and mercury. This was originally the site of a mercury mine which was active between the 1940s and 1960s. No production records were found. Geologic mapping, trenching, tunneling and bulk sampling of this property have been occurring continuously over the last 15 to 20 years. More recently, Homestake Mining Company and Molycorp did extensive exploration drilling in this area which has shown favorable gold and silver values.

The majority of the WSA has moderate potential for occurrence of gold, silver and mercury. This rating is based on the existence of the Paramount Mine, the Bluebird prospect and numerous other prospects in a large area of hydrothermally-altered volcanic rocks. These areas of hydrothermal silicification and clay alteration have been shown to be a favorable environment for precious metal deposition.

The southern area of high metallic potential is within the historic Bodie Mining District. This famous mining district was active from 1859 through the 1920s and is credited with the production of approximately 1.5 million ounces of gold and more than 15 million ounces of silver. The faulted and altered volcanic host rock of Bodie "Bonanza Zone" extends a short distance into the WSA.

As of spring 1986, 485 unpatented mining claims were located within the WSA.

The entire WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources. This rating is based on: the presence of hot springs and wells in the vicinity of the WSA; large areas showing evidence of hydrothermal alteration; extinct hot spring deposits; and the presence of relatively young volcanics in a highly faulted environment.

2. Summary of significant new mineral data collected since the suitability recommendation which should be considered in the final recommendation: No U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) or U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA.

Homestake Mining Company submitted additional information on the Paramount Mine, Bodie, Rough Creek, Atastra Creek, Dry Lakes, Hilton Springs and Bald Peak prospects. This information was received by BLM in May of 1988.

Homestake's report recaps the production history and geology of the Bodie District. Between 1935 and 1976 several companies explored and analyzed the Bodie system. Twenty-one exploration holes were drilled during this time. Homestake began their exploration activities in 1976. Since then, extensive mapping, sampling, and metallurgy has been done as well as the drilling of 63 additional exploration holes. Using a 0.02 ounce/ton gold cut-off grade, Homestake feels that they have identified a possible 24 million tons of ore at 0.069 ounce/ton gold and 0.42 ounce/ton silver. This additional data does not change the G-E-M classification of high potential or the location of the potential area. However, it does add support to the conclusions reached in G-E-M.

To date, there have been 107 exploration holes drilled in the Paramount area totalling 14,088 feet. Using a cut-off grade of 0.02 ounces/ton gold, Homestake has identified a possible 9.3 million tons at 0.03 ounces/ton gold and 0.06 ounces/ton silver. An additional five to seven million tons of ore grade rock may be present in a 3,400-foot-long, 1,500-foot-wide zone southwest of the Paramount Mine. More drilling is required to prove this zone. This additional data adds support to the G-E-M classification of high potential in this area and enlarges the area of high potential.

No additional data was submitted which would change the moderate potential classification for metallics in the Rough Creek, Atastra Creek, Dry Lakes, Bald Peak and Hilton Springs areas.

The accompanying map reflects the current assessment of mineral occurrence potential based on current information about the area.

A review of BLM records in May of 1988 show that one geothermal lease application for 320 acres remains in the northeastern corner of the WSA. As of May 1988, BLM records indicate the following unpatented mining claims in the WSA:

Table 4 - Mining Claims

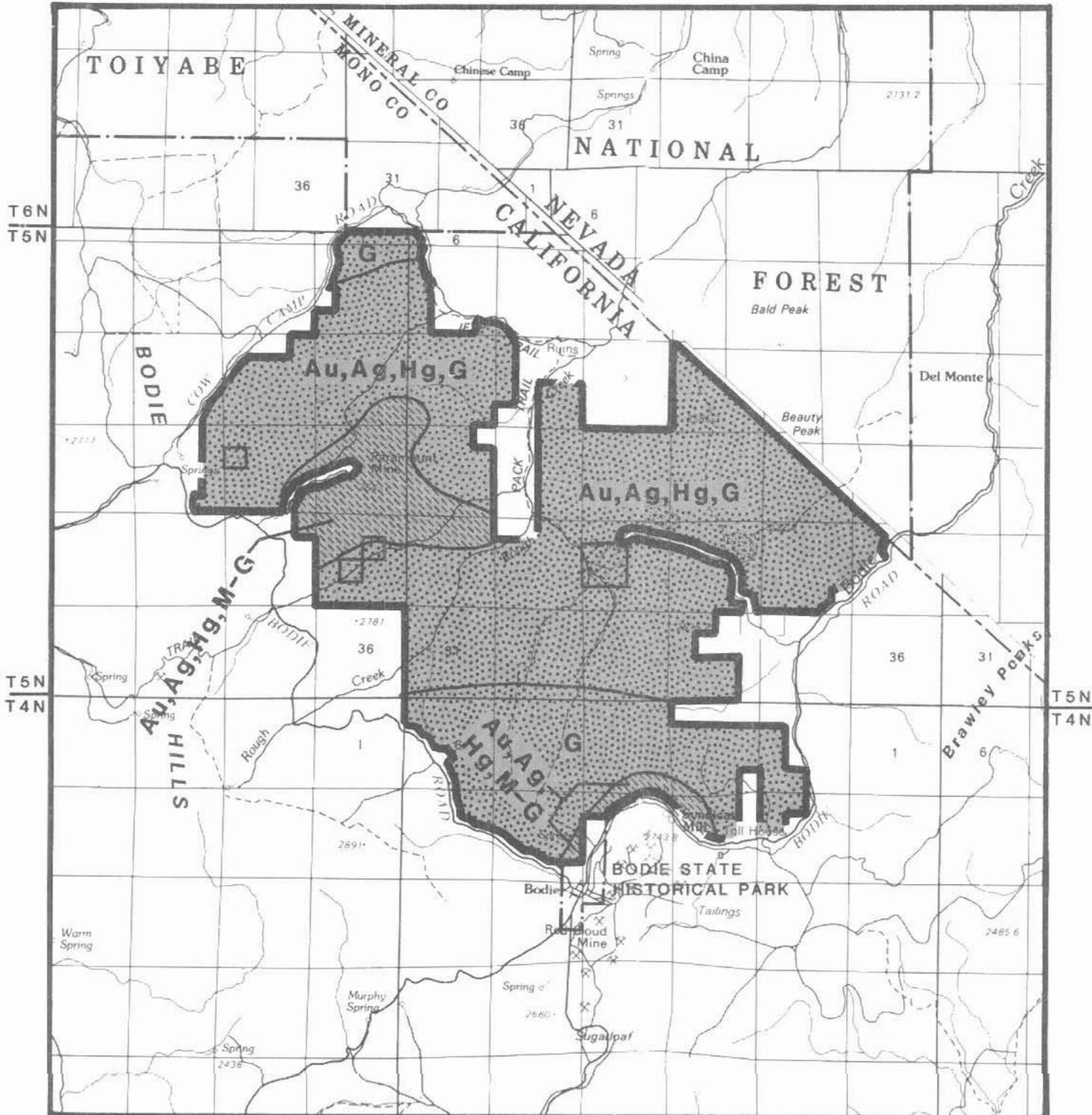
TYPE	NO.			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Mining Claims						
Lode	0	353	353	0	7,060	7,060
Placer	0	1	1	0	40	40
Mill Sites	0	2	2	0	10	10
Total	0	356	356	0	7,110	7,110

E. Impacts on Resources

The following table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or non-designation of the entire area as wilderness. (For a full explanation of this summary, refer to the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness - Final Environmental Impact Statement.)

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

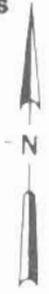
ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO-WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values*	The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the Paramount Mine area and in portions of the WSA's west quarter. An open-pit mine and projected geothermal exploration would disturb 436 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features, particularly crucial fawning habitat, of the WSA.	The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to, perhaps, minor enhancement of the long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, prohibition of geothermal exploration, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting and piñon nut collection, would provide minor benefits to wilderness values. Foregone geothermal exploration and any unforeseen development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. The high probability of valid existing	Designation of the 6,945 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 450 annual visitor use days related to motor vehicle access, a slight reduction of vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance, and the prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 180 acres of accessible piñon-juniper woodland. On the 9,942 acres not designated as wilderness there would be high adverse



- NONE Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- Ag** Silver
 - Au** Gold
 - G** Geothermal
 - Hg** Mercury



Bodie
Mineral Resource Potential



Map-2
010-100

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO-WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values (continued)		rights determination for mining claims in the Paramount Mine area would lead to the development of an open-pit gold mine. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted in the Paramount Mine area.	impacts to wilderness values from projected development of a 420-acre open-pit gold mine near the Paramount Mine area. In addition, there would be some temporary impacts to wilderness values from projected geothermal exploration on 16 acres of public lands in the WSA's western quarter. Very slight adverse impacts to wilderness values would occur from continued motor vehicle use related to recreation, fuelwood cutting, and piñon nut collection.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. Use will continue as prescribed in the Bodie-Coleville MFP and is projected to remain stable at the current 1,000 visitor-days.	Wilderness designation would close the entire 16,814-acre WSA and eliminate 1,000 visitor-days. Due to the relatively large number of displaced users including the Modesto Ridgerunner's 4-WD poker rally this would result in a moderate impact on motorized recreation use.	Impacts on motorized recreation use in the wilderness portion of the WSA would only be minor due to opportunities outside the WSA as well as increased use of the non-wilderness portion of the WSA. While 450 visitor days would be eliminated from the designated area, an increase in the non-designated portion from the current 550 visitor-days to a projected 750 visitor-days would limit overall impacts to motorized recreation use.

*Additional data received since the FEIS was printed in 1987 may affect the degree of impact to wilderness values. Refer to minerals resource section of this document.

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont.)

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO-WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for geothermal development however only exploration activities are anticipated.	There would only be negligible impacts to geothermal resource development. Exploration in the western quarter of the WSA would be foregone. However, no development is projected within the WSA due to only a moderate potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential.	There would be only a very minimal impact on geothermal resource development as a result of wilderness designation of 6,915 acres. Within the non-wilderness portion of the WSA there would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. Projected exploration activities could occur.
Cultural Resources	Surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources in areas predicted very highly sensitive. Surface inventories to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts would be required.	There would be low positive benefits to cultural resources due to precluding geothermal exploration and continued motorized recreation use.	In the 9,899 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources. Surface inventories would be required to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts. There would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources within the 6,915 acres designated wilderness.
Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat	Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in the direct loss of 420 acres and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of the available fawning habitat. Geothermal development would result in only minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.	Wilderness designation would result in minor positive benefits to crucial fawning habitat due to the elimination of 1,000 visitor-days and preclusion of geothermal exploration. However, projected open-pit mining would occur whether the area is designated wilderness or not. Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in direct loss of 420 acres of fawning habitat and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of available fawning habitat.	There would be only a minor positive benefit to crucial fawning habitat within the 6,915 acres designated wilderness. Mining activity within the non-designated portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of 420 acres of habitat and a long-term loss of productivity on 1,500 acres representing 17% of the available fawning habitat in the WSA. Geothermal development would only result in minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

During the inventory phase, numerous comments were received which addressed the unit's resource values, including potential rockhounding values and mineral and geothermal resource values. The need for utility line expansion was also expressed. One comment noted private inholdings as affecting wilderness values. And finally, a few individuals supported wilderness designation, noting special features in the area.

After the inventory, several comments were received during the wilderness study process. A few comments noted a favorable geologic environment for mineral deposits and one identified high geothermal resource potential in the area. One comment indicated that private inholdings and access routes negate wilderness values and another expressed the need for a 2,000-foot expansion of the existing transmission-line corridor in Bodie Creek.

During the study phase, a public meeting and public hearing were held in association with the draft environmental impact statement for the WSAs within the EIS area. The public meeting was held in Markleeville, California and the public hearing in Bishop, California. Comments were received both orally through the hearing and in writing during the 90-day public review period. A total of 81 written and oral comments were received. Thirty-two comments supported the Bureau's no-wilderness recommendation, forty-two comments supported the all-wilderness alternative, and seven comments supported the partial-wilderness alternative.

No Federal or State agency comments were received specific to this WSA.

Mono County provided a comment during the inventory which expressed the need for multiple use of the area.