

# **Machesna**

*CA-010-108*



MACHESNA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-010-108)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 70 acres

The Machesna WSA is located in San Luis Obispo County approximately 25 miles east of San Luis Obispo. The WSA includes 70 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA is bordered by the Los Padres National Forest (USFS) on the north, Bureau of Land Management wilderness on the east, and private land on the south and west.

The WSA consists of south-facing slopes, primarily chemise chaparral with blue oak woodland, annual grassland, and an occasional Digger pine. North-facing slopes support mixed chaparral of chemise, manzanita, and ceanothus.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the Central California Section 202 Wilderness Study Areas. A summary of the area's wilderness values was included in the Final EIS. Two different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EIS: all wilderness and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 0 acres recommended for wilderness  
70 BLM acres recommended for non-wilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in the 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 for the following reasons: the moderate potential for occurrence of oil and gas in the unit, the use of the primitive vehicle route through the unit for the annual Hi Mountain Motorcycle Enduro, the area's wilderness values are not outstanding, and the addition of this parcel as wilderness would add an irregular boundary difficult to manage.

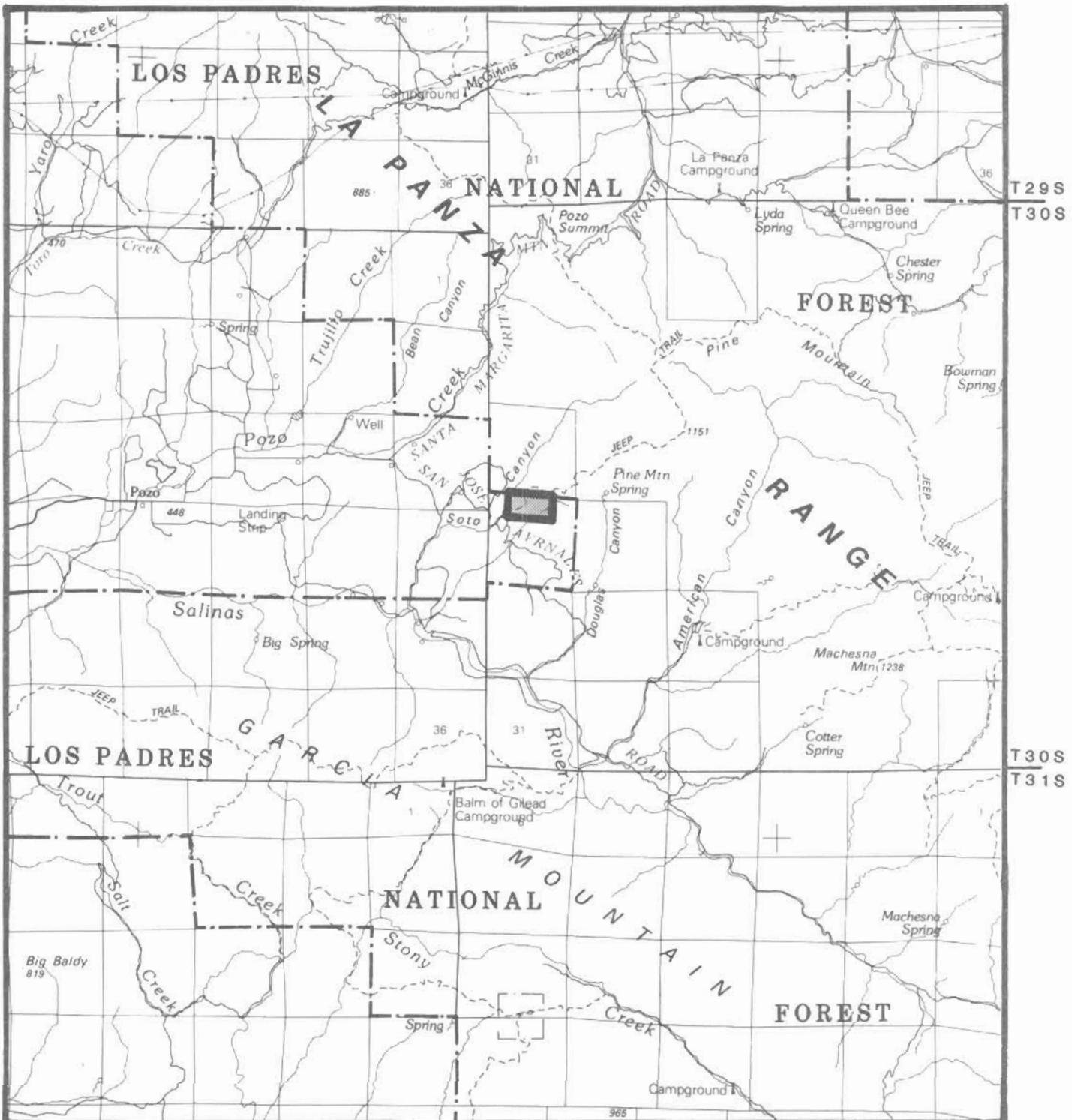
The total area of the WSA has been found to have a moderate mineral resource potential for the occurrence of oil and gas.

Vehicle use of the WSA is concentrated along the one existing primitive vehicle route through the area, a quarter-mile section of primitive route running along the USFS designated Machesna Wilderness and cutting through the

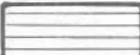
northwest corner of the WSA. This route has been used since 1950 and continues to be used for the one-day annual Hi Mountain Enduro - a motorcycle event sponsored by the Cal Poly Penguins Motorcycle Club. This event, which is usually held during late March, starts, finishes and has pit/camp areas within the Los Padres National Forest. The route within the WSA completes the Nick Route portion of the overall course with approximately 75 to 100 riders making one pass through the WSA. The vehicle route is closed to all recreational vehicles the remainder of the year by a locked gate on private land to the west. Wilderness designation would eliminate the Nick Route from the Hi Mountain Enduro; this would affect the availability of the only recreational vehicle route out of the Machesna Mountain area. The 1984 California Wilderness Act used the vehicle route as a boundary for the Machesna Wilderness Area, so that vehicles could continue to use this route in the forest. Use of this primitive route causes negligible short-term impacts to the area.

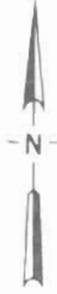
The wilderness values of the area are not outstanding and there are no special features within the WSA. Current management has proven effective in maintaining the area's existing resources.

The WSA borders designated wilderness, but its projection from the boundary and its lack of topographic continuity with the adjacent Los Padres National Forest Machesna Wilderness creates management problems. The USFS has indicated that the addition of this area would not enhance their wilderness management capability.



-  NONE
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Machesna Proposal**  
MAP-1



010-108  
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)	70
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		70
<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 Lands Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	70
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		70

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The WSA has generally retained its naturalness with the exception of a seldom used one-quarter-mile long primitive vehicle route that runs through the northwest corner of the WSA. This vehicle route is not used for general recreation traffic; access is controlled to the west by a gate on private land.

Steep terrain and thick vegetation has limited this route to a very narrow corridor; it does not impact the total area's naturalness.

2. Solitude: Topographical diversity and vegetative screening provide opportunities for solitude in the WSA, but they are limited due to the WSA's size and boundary with private land on two sides. The WSA's shape and configuration outside the topographical boundaries of the adjacent USFS Machesna Wilderness limit solitude even when

considered in conjunction with the bordering wilderness. Negligible impact to solitude could occur with the continued infrequent use of the quarter-mile primitive vehicle route.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and unconfined recreation: The WSA's size and location next to private land activities severely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Even in conjunction with adjacent wilderness lands, a dense vegetative cover restricts movement in the area. The only vehicle route running through the WSA is a quarter-mile primitive road. It is used intermittently as part of one loop of a motorcycle enduro. The landowner to the west of the WSA keeps a gate to the vehicle route locked the rest of the year. No other vehicle use occurs in the WSA. An occasional hunter or hiker may utilize the WSA otherwise no significant recreation use exists.
4. Special features: The Machesna WSA contains no ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

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 70 acres of the California Chaparral/California Oakwoods ecosystem. Wilderness designation of the Machesna Mountain 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>				
California Chaparral/ California Oakwoods	4	105,301	6	39,656
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California Chaparral/ California Oakwoods	4	105,301	6	39,656

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 15 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>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,515
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Fresno	35	4,048,852	28	460,790
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Merced	33	3,957,550	25	348,753
Modesto	36	4,126,963	81	1,722,326
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Salinas-Seaside-Monterey	24	3,676,896	45	644,415
San Francisco-Oakland	39	4,473,002	39	565,614
San Jose	27	3,765,512	29	352,748
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc	20	1,166,142	35	528,590
Santa Cruz	27	3,765,512	32	407,890
Stockton	35	4,061,833	46	601,496
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: There are no other BLM WSAs within 50 air miles recommended for wilderness designation. The Santa Lucia Wilderness is located approximately ten miles northwest of the WSA. The San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness Areas are located 35 and 40 miles, respectively, to the south of the WSA. All areas mentioned are managed by the Los Padres National Forest.

- C. Manageability: The Machesna WSA is manageable as wilderness but only with difficulty. Manageability problems include the area's small size and the lack of topographic continuity of the WSA with the adjacent USFS wilderness. Also, there are no natural boundaries to prevent encroachment of bordering private land activities. Frequent signing of the borders would be required to insure the integrity of the unit.

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 geology and mineral resources of the Machesna Section 202 WSA is described in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) 1988 Final EIS, Land and Resource Management Plan, Los Padres National Forest, AMS - Minerals addendum and shown on an unpublished geologic map by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) (i.e., Dibblee, 1971, "Geologic Map of the Pozo Quadrangle, California"; USGS, Open File Map 72-89).

The mineral resource data in the Affected Environment section of the 1988 BLM Wilderness Recommendations, California Section 202 Wilderness Study Area Final EIS is based primarily on these data sources. The BLM EIS indicates that the whole WSA has a moderate mineral resource potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. (See accompanying mineral potential map). The WSA is in the Coast Range geomorphic province and is composed primarily of Cretaceous marine sandstones, clay shales and cobble conglomerates.

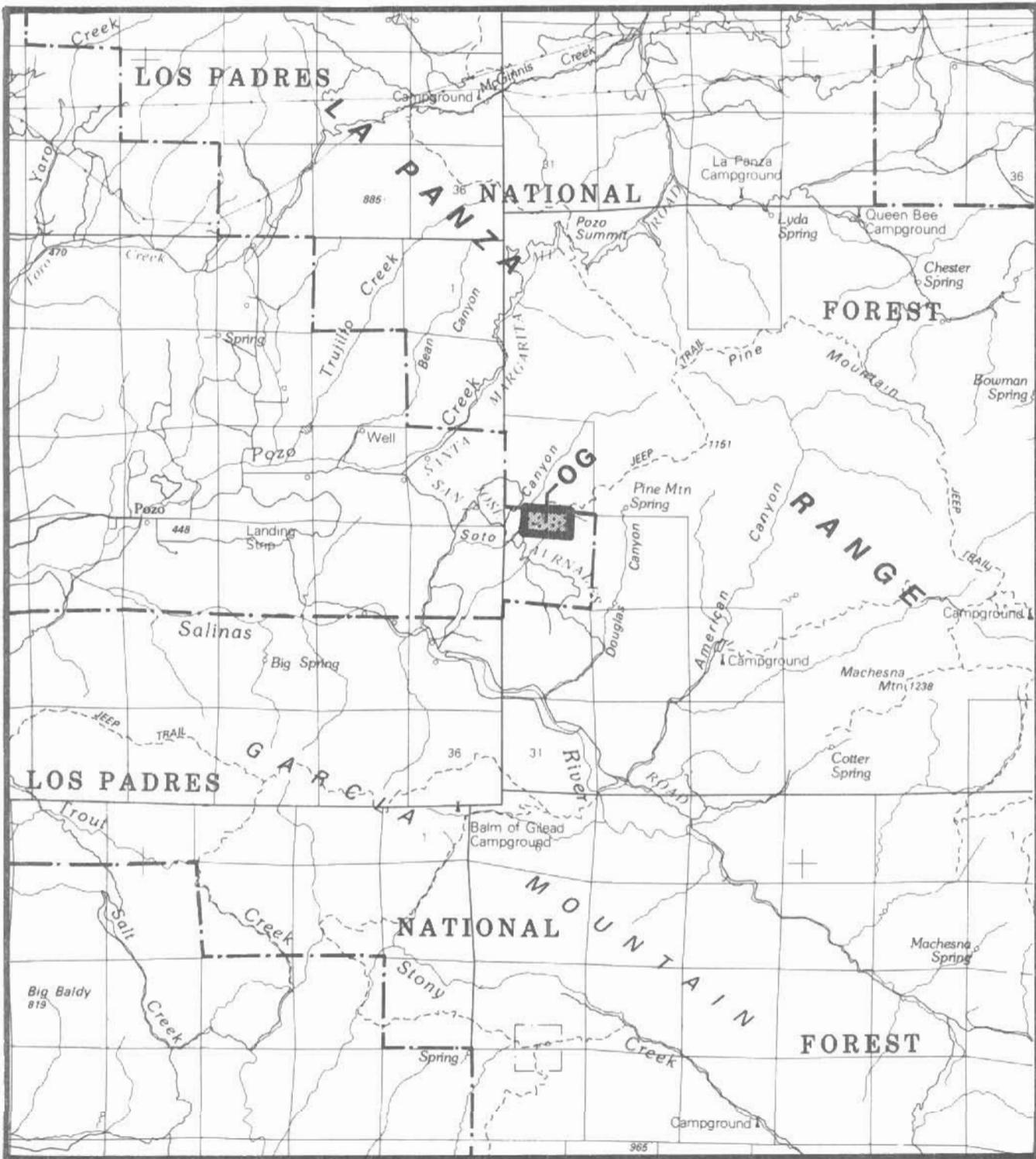
Exposures of younger Miocene-age sandstones, shales, and interbedded cobble conglomerates of the Santa Margarita Shale formation are present to the west, just outside the WSA. These non-conforming rocks overlay the Cretaceous strata.

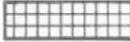
The La Panza Fault trends in a northwest direction through the WSA. Older Cretaceous rocks on the east side of the fault have been thrust over the younger Miocene rocks on the west side. This overthrust may have formed structural or stratigraphic traps conducive to the accumulation of oil and gas. The Santa Margarita Shale formation is known to contain producing zones of oil and gas in other areas of the California Coast Range.

The rocks in the southwest half of the WSA (west side of the fault) are covered with Pleistocene sand and gravel deposits. Recent stream deposits overlay or cut through this material in the extreme northwest corner of the WSA. However, due to the remote location, distance to market and lack of expressed interest, these salable deposits are considered to have a low mineral resource potential. The geologic environment is not favorable for the occurrence of locatable mineral resources.

BLM records dated March 25, 1988 identified no unpatented mining claims, mineral leases or mineral material sales contracts or permits.

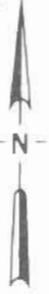
2. Summary of significant new mineral resource data collected since the suitability recommendation, which should be considered in the final recommendation: No USGS or USBM mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA. As of May 1988, no new mineral resource information concerning this WSA has been obtained.



-  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**  
**OG** Oil & Gas



**Machesna  
 Mineral Resource Potential**



**Map-2  
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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 Central California Section 202 - Wilderness Final Environmental Impact Statement.)

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION NO-WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Wilderness values will be negligibly impacted as a result of not designating the WSA as wilderness. Although there is no motorized recreational use in the WSA, a one-quarter-mile-long primitive vehicle route that crosses the northwest corner of the WSA would continue to be used for the Hi Mountain Enduro motorcycle event. Approximately 75 riders will disrupt solitude when the annual event occurs. Continued infrequent use of the route to replace salt licks in the adjacent USFS grazing allotment will result in negligible impacts to solitude. Potential fire suppression activities necessary to control wild-fire could lead to short-term impacts to the perception of naturalness.	There would be a slight positive benefit to wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as a result of precluding the Hi Mountain Enduro motorcycle event and vehicle access for the adjacent USFS grazing allotment. Long-term protection from unanticipated future actions that could result in potential adverse impacts would be provided by wilderness legislation.
Impacts on Hi Mountain Enduro	The Hi Mountain Enduro will continue to use one-quarter mile of primitive vehicle route in the WSA. Therefore, there would be no impact on the event.	Wilderness designation would preclude the use of the WSA for the Hi Mountain Enduro.

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 wilderness inventory phase, one comment addressed the inventory unit's potential for oil and gas development.

During the study phase, a public hearing was held in Bakersfield, California and written comments were accepted until February 15, 1988. The majority of the comments received supported the all-wilderness alternative for this unit.

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