

## **APPENDIX K**

**APPENDIX K – WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**K.1 Introduction..... K-1**

    K.1.1 Scope..... K-1

    K.1.2 Specific Documents and Data Utilized..... K-1

    K.1.3 Authority and Guidance for Wilderness Characteristics Management..... K-2

    K.1.4 Interdisciplinary Team Process ..... K-2

**K.2 Wilderness Characteristics Elements..... K-2**

    K.2.1 Size ..... K-3

    K.2.2 Naturalness..... K-3

    K.2.3 Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive and Unconfined Types  
        of Recreation..... K-3

**K.3 Review of Past Wilderness Inventories ..... K-4**

**K.4 Review of Acquired Lands ..... K-5**

**K.5 Review of Public Wilderness Proposals ..... K-5**

**K.6 Areas Eliminated from Further Consideration ..... K-6**

**K.7 Wilderness Characteristics Assessment ..... K-8**

    K.7.1 Big Pine Meadow ..... K-8

    K.7.2 Bear Mountain ..... K-8

    K.7.3 Chappell D, Parcel ..... K-10

    K.7.4 Cyrus Canyon Audubon Donation..... K-10

    K.7.5 Edgar Ranch West ..... K-11

    K.7.6 Lamont Meadow ..... K-12

    K.7.7 Patterson Bend ..... K-12

    K.7.8 Public Proposal IV ..... K-13

    K.7.9 Public Proposal V ..... K-14

    K.7.10 Roszeweka Ranch..... K-14

## **K.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Handbook 1601-1-Land Use Planning Handbook identifies broad-scale decisions that guide future land management actions and subsequent site specific implementation decisions. BLM Handbook 1610-1 - Appendix C - Part K - Wilderness Characteristics directs BLM field offices to identify decisions to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation).

Through the RMP planning revision, the Bakersfield FO must determine which portions of BLM lands with wilderness characteristics would be protected or preserved. This is achieved through the consideration of prescriptive management for the protection wilderness characteristics of these areas in one or more alternatives.

### **K.1.1 SCOPE**

This inventory is intended to provide an assessment of whether wilderness characteristics are present on BLM lands within the Bakersfield FO, outside of designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The inventory process was developed to examine all Bakersfield FO lands, specifically (1) to review original wilderness inventories conducted by the BLM between 1978 and 1980 ensuring current and accurate information exists to analyze the environmental impacts of alternatives on BLM land with wilderness characteristics; (2) to study newly acquired lands not previously inventoried; and (3) to address proposals from the public to inventory and protect BLM lands with wilderness characteristics. This inventory does not present the decisions whether to protect/preserve or manage for an alternate use those lands identified as having wilderness characteristics. Those decisions are made and analyzed in the RMP/EIS and vary by alternative.

### **K.1.2 SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS AND DATA UTILIZED**

The inventory used the following data sources and documents to assess whether wilderness characteristics were present along with field verification as appropriate:

- Bakersfield FO travel and transportation information;
- Bakersfield FO route inventories (GIS);
- Aerial photos (GIS);
- Digital ortho quads;
- Range improvements (GIS);
- Bakersfield FO range allotment management files;
- Oil and gas leases (GIS);
- BLM's LR2000 database for ROWs, mineral claims, oil and gas leasing; and
- Field investigations.

This inventory documents all known valid existing rights, grandfathered uses, and public land investments. However, due to timing and resource constraints; a full field examination of each area for human disturbances did not take place.

### **K.1.3 AUTHORITY AND GUIDANCE FOR WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS MANAGEMENT**

The BLM has authority under Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA to inventory wilderness characteristics and to consider such information during land use planning. Through the land use planning process, as directed by Section 202 and 302 of FLPMA, the BLM will consider all available information to determine the mix of resource use and protection that best serves the multiple-use mandate in FLPMA.

### **K.1.4 INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM PROCESS**

The Interdisciplinary Team of BLM resource specialists in the Bakersfield FO who participated in the completion of the Wilderness Characteristics Assessment are listed in Table K-1.

**Table K-1  
Bakersfield FO Interdisciplinary Team Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Resource</b>
Lisa Ashley	Air, Soil, Water
Tammy Whitley	Archaeology
Susan Porter	Project Manager
Peter De Witt	Recreation, Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management, Special Designations
Karen Doran	Range
Denis Kearns	Botany
Steve Larson	Assistant Field Manager
Jeff Prude	Minerals
Chris Ryan	Fire
Larry Saslaw	Wildlife
Diane Simpson	Realty
Larry Vredenburgh	Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

## **K.2 WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS ELEMENTS**

The following elements were used to establish the presense of wilderness characteristics on public lands within the Decision Area. Namely: whether the area meets the size criteria, demonstrates naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

**K.2.1 SIZE**

*Do the lands possess sufficient size to allow for management of wilderness characteristics?*

Sufficient size is deemed to be roadless areas with over 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM lands, or if less than 5,000 acres they are contiguous with either:

- Designated Wilderness,
- BLM Wilderness Study Areas,
- BLM lands managed for wilderness characteristics,
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service area Proposed for Wilderness Designation,
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Study Areas or areas of Recommended Wilderness, and
- National Park Service area Recommended or Proposed for Designation.

Finally an area of less than 5,000 acres may qualify if its preservation and use is deemed practicable in an unimpaired condition.

**K.2.2 NATURALNESS**

*Do the lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness? Are the lands affected primarily by the forces of nature? Is the imprint of human activity substantially unnoticeable?*

Naturalness is present within an area that has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of human activity substantially unnoticeable. Some imprints of human activity may exist if they are substantially unnoticeable. More consideration is given to “apparent naturalness” rather than “natural integrity.” Apparent naturalness refers to whether an area appears to be in a natural condition to the average visitor who is not familiar with the biological composition of natural ecosystems versus human-affected ecosystems in a given area. Major influences on apparent naturalness are structures, evidence of past significant vegetative disturbance, such as logging, and other obvious surface-disturbing activities. Natural integrity refers to the presence or absence of ecosystems that are relatively unaffected by human activity, such as the presence of native vegetative communities and absence of invasive species.

**K.2.3 OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE AND PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPES OF RECREATION**

*Do visitors have outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation? Are the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people rare or infrequent? Can visitors feel isolated, alone, or secluded from others? Is the use of the area primarily through non-motorized or non-mechanical means, with no or minimal recreation facilities?*

“Solitude” is defined as the state of being alone or remote from others; isolation; a lonely or secluded place. “Outstanding” is defined as standing out among others of its kind; conspicuous; prominent; superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent. Presence of this wilderness characteristic considers an individual’s opportunity to avoid the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people in the area. Factors that affect opportunities for solitude are the size and configuration

of the unit; vegetative and topographic screening; ability of visitors to find a secluded spot, even when others are present in the area. It does not consider the sights and sounds of human activity outside of the unit's boundaries, unless they are so extremely imposing that they cannot be ignored.

Primitive and unconfined recreation includes activities that provide dispersed undeveloped recreation and do not require facilities or motorized equipment. Some examples are hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, caving, horseback riding, rock climbing, river running, cross-country skiing, and bird watching. An area may possess outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, either through the diversity in the number of primitive and unconfined recreation possible or the outstanding quality of one opportunity.

### **K.3 REVIEW OF PAST WILDERNESS INVENTORIES**

The BLM reviewed published wilderness inventory reports and maps that were prepared as a result of the original inventories conducted between 1978 and 1980, under Section 603 of FLPMA (Table K-2). This review enabled the BLM to consider any new information that was not considered as part of the original inventories.

**Table K-2**  
**Lands Previously Studied for Wilderness Characteristics**

<b>Inventory Number<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
CA-010-002 / CAC060-002	Hopper Mountain	783
CA-010-007 / CAC060-007	Tepusquet Peak	1,024
CA-010-016 / CAC060-016	Sespe-Frazier	243
CA-010-017 / CAC060-017	Orchard Peak	1,840
CA-010-028 / CAC060-028	Bear Mountain <sup>2</sup>	2,226
CA-010-035 / CAC060-035	Temblor Range	~15,000
CA-010-036 / CAC060-036	Spoor Canyon / Public Proposal I	240
CA-010-037 / CAC060-037	Cuyama / Public Proposal II & III	1,014
CA-010-040 / CAC060-040	Freeborn/Hubbard	7,192
CA-010-052 / CAC060-052	Walker Basin/Caliente Creek	360

These previous inventories determined that the areas listed above were not suitable for management of wilderness characteristics and consequently not identified as WSAs. Although public perceptions of wilderness values and characteristics have changed over the past thirty years in that remote areas with some development would be considered as still possessing wilderness characteristics, the characteristics of these areas have not changed and the level of or potential for development still exceeds threshold for naturalness.

The substantial population growth of southern and central California, oil and gas development, and increase in demand for non-primitive recreation experiences has further diluted the potential for

<sup>1</sup> Old / New inventory numbers (updated to match current numbering systems)

<sup>2</sup> 13,134 acres of the original study area designated as the Chimney Peak Wilderness area in 1994.

wilderness characteristics management within these areas. The exception being Bear Mountain, of which a large portion was designated as the Chimney Peak Wilderness area in 1994; the remaining area (2,230 acres) was excluded from the Wilderness designation due to the presence of roads and remnants of mining operations.

#### **K.4 REVIEW OF ACQUIRED LANDS**

Since the last round of wilderness characteristic inventories concluded in the early 1980s, the BLM's land ownership pattern has not changed drastically. Lands have been acquired through purchase, exchange, and donation that may or may not have wilderness characteristics. In some cases, lands have been specifically acquired for their wilderness characteristics and are managed either within designated Wilderness or on the boundaries of designated Wilderness. The following table (Table K-3) identifies the most prominent acquisitions that have been considered within this inventory.

**Table K-3  
Acquisitions Reviewed**

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Big Pine Meadow	645
Lamont Meadow	219
Vig Parcel	301
Chappell, J Parcel	317
Allen Parcel	120
Ortega Parcel	40
Big Foot Spring	116
Chappell, D Parcel	119
Roszevska Ranch	419
Craig Ranch	967
Compensation Lands	283
Piedras Blancas Light Station	20
Atwell Island	7,936
Patterson Bend	2,368
Cyrus Canyon Donation	1,501
NPR II	10,777

#### **K.5 REVIEW OF PUBLIC WILDERNESS PROPOSALS**

During the scoping phase for the Bakersfield RMP revision comments were received with regard to Wilderness, WSAs, and lands with wilderness characteristics. These comments came from both individuals and groups, including The Wilderness Society, Los Padres Forest Watch, Defenders of Wildlife, California Wilderness Coalition, Sierra Club California/Nevada Desert Committee, Center for Biological Diversity, Californians for Western Wilderness, and Sequoia Forest Keepers. The following (Table K-4) is a summary of the areas presented in public comments as possessing wilderness characteristics or worthy of closer investigation.

**Table K-4**  
**Public Proposals Reviewed**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
I	T9N, R27W, Sec. 2	239	Adjacent to USFS Fox Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area and Senator Boxer-proposed San Rafael Wilderness Addition. Drill hole and access road to be excluded.
II	T9N, R25W, Sec. 16 & 22	254	Adjacent to USFS Fox Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area and Senator Boxer-proposed San Rafael Wilderness Addition. Excluding minor road encroachments.
III	T9N, R25W, Sec. 14, 22, 23 & 24	744	Adjacent to USFS Cuyama Inventoried Roadless Area. Excluding a road that crosses the corner of one area.
IV	T10N, R23W, Sec. 26, 34 & 35	471	Adjacent to USFS Antimony Inventoried Roadless Area and Senator Boxer-proposed Chumash Wilderness Addition. Contains bulldozer line from fire suppression activities.
V	Bright Star Additions	8,846	Senator Boxer-proposed Bright Star Additions.

Three of these public proposals coincide with the existing wilderness characteristics inventory as identified in Section 14.3 above.

## **K.6 AREAS ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

The following areas were eliminated from further consideration and assessment in this inventory as they lacked one or more of the elements of wilderness characteristics. With the exception of the public proposals, none of these areas is considered in the RMP for management to protect wilderness characteristics.

**Atwell Island:** —Includes various parcels of active and abandoned farmlands; as such, the influence and evidence of human activity is present throughout the area (i.e., lack naturalness).

**Compensation Lands:** —These are various parcels of land acquired through the compensation process for disturbance occurring throughout oil and gas fields. Each of the areas is small, isolated, and generally surrounded by private property (i.e., does not possess sufficient size).

**Craig Ranch:** —Located within the Case Mountain ACEC, the area continues to be grazed. Many routes, including motorized and mechanized primitive roads and trails cross the area; as such, the evidence of human activity is inescapable (i.e., lacks naturalness).

**Freeborn/Hubbard CA-010-040:** - The area, although of substantial size, is not roadless in nature and the evidence of human activities is inescapable (i.e., lacks naturalness).

**Hopper Mountain CA-010-002:** - As an active oil and gas field, the area is currently under lease and being developed, and the evidence and influence of human activity is inescapable (i.e., lacks naturalness).

**National Petroleum Reserve II (NPR2):** —As an active oil and gas field, the area is widely developed, and the evidence and influence of human activity are inescapable (i.e., lacks naturalness).

**Parcels Already within Boundary of Designated Wilderness Areas:** —The following areas were not evaluated as the entire area is within a congressionally designated Wilderness area: Vig Parcel, Chappell J. Parcel, Allen Parcel, Ortega Parcel, and Big Foot Spring.

**Piedras Blancas Light Station:** —The light station is a 19-acre parcel on the central California coastline. The area does not meet the minimum size requirements, and the evidence and influence of human activity is widespread, both on the property and adjacent lands.

**Public Wilderness Proposals I, II & III:** —The lands identified by the public in PWP I, II, and III were previously inventoried for wilderness characteristics in the Final Intensive Inventory of Public Lands Administered by BLM California outside the California Desert Conservation Area, December 1979. Within this intensive inventory, these lands were considered as the Cuyama unit and Spoor Canyon Unit, identified as CA-010-037 and CA-010-036. The parcels identified by the public mimic the Cuyama and Spoor Canyon units, which was described as “small parcels of public land located west of Ventucopa and bordering the eastern edge of the Cuyama and Fox Mountain RARE II Areas.” The lands identified consist primarily of low rounded hills, although portions of the sandy Cuyama River bed are included. Vegetation consists mostly of coastal chaparral on the hillsides and is relatively nonexistent in the riverbed. The original acreage inventoried included 1,014 acres, 974 acres of which was eliminated from the inventory unit due to unnatural features, i.e., impacts by man that have degraded the natural character, including several primitive routes, an abandoned trailer, and an improved road. The terrain variety provides some screening from man’s work, making a telephone line almost unnoticeable. The restrictive size of the lands when considered in isolation provides little opportunity for solitude and primitive unconfined recreation. When considered with the USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) and proposed Wilderness, its ability to provide such opportunities is increased; however, this must be weighed against other resource values, including mineral resource potential and ability to provide access to mineral resources within the USFS boundary, where major constraints to the industry may be in place. The finding of the Final Intensive Inventory was that the Cuyama and Spoor units did not possess wilderness characteristics and was unsuitable to remain as a WSA. Even with additional information, the potential for an evolution in adjacent management to designated federal Wilderness, this finding is unchanged.

In order to fully analyze the areas proposed by the public, these areas are considered for management to promote wilderness characteristics (although not present) in at least one alternative of the RMP.

**Sespe-Frazier CA-010-016:** —The area is no longer in federal ownership.

**Temblor Range CA-010-035:** —The area, although of sufficient size, is traversed by many roads and trails as a result of the active grazing operations and recreational use of the area (i.e., lacks naturalness).

**Tepusquet Peak CA-010-007:** —Although sizable (over 1,000 acres) the area is not large enough to meet the size criteria (i.e., does not possess sufficient size) and its proximity to a developed residential community (to the west) would make management for nonimpairment difficult.

**Walker Basin/Caliente Creek CA-010-052:** —The area is not of sufficient size, even when consideration is given to adjacent lands as to allow for management in a nonimpaired condition.

## **K.7 WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS ASSESSMENT**

The following areas were assessed in this inventory for the elements of wilderness characteristics. In addition to the public proposals above, all of these areas are considered in the RMP for management to protect wilderness characteristics.

### **K.7.1 BIG PINE MEADOW**

Big Pine Meadow is between the congressionally designated Sacatar and Domelands Wilderness areas, approximately three miles from the community of Kennedy Meadows in Tulare County. The area is approximately 645 acres that border on approximately 57,000 acres of Wilderness area.

#### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

This area is composed of the rugged eastern face of the Sierra Nevada. Topography ranges from valley, canyons, and alluvial fans to steep hills that lead into granite peaks, and ridgetops reaching elevations of more than 7,800 feet. Vegetation is extremely diversified, with creosote bush, desert shrubs, and Joshua trees on the lower slopes and cacti and scattered pinyon-juniper woodlands on the upper slopes. Several of the canyons are complemented by springs with their riparian habitats of cottonwoods, willows, and grasses. Wildlife within the area includes mule deer, golden eagle, prairie falcon, quail, and dove.

One route bisects the area, Kennedy Meadows Road, providing one of the main access points to the local community from the east.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics, with the exception of the one route crossing the area, which could be removed from wilderness characteristics management. When considered with its contiguous existing wilderness areas, its natural appearance provides opportunities for solitude and unconfined primitive types of recreation.

### **K.7.2 BEAR MOUNTAIN**

The Bear Mountain unit, previously studied (CA-010-028) was largely designated as the Chimney Peak Wilderness by the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. The remaining are was excluded

from the Wilderness designation due to the presence of roads and remnants of historic mining activity.

### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

The landscape is a rugged and mountainous desert environment where valleys, canyons, alluvial fans, and steep hills lead into rugged granite mountains. The area comprises the transitional zone between the Mojave Desert to the east and the Sierra Nevada. In winter the area is often blanketed in snow, however the snowfall is usually short-lived and spring arrives earlier than in the high Sierra. Summer-time temperatures fluctuate around the 90's cooling off during the night. Terrain and altitude changes within the wilderness can create abrupt changes in climatic conditions over short distances.

Vegetation throughout the area is diverse. The three major floristic provinces occur, the California, Great Basin, and Desert floristic provinces. Three of the subregions identified in the Jepson Manual are represented also: the Southern Sierra Nevada foothills, the Southern High Sierra Nevada, and the Mojave Desert. The desert species, such as Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) and creosote brush (*Larrea tridentata*) occupy the lower elevations, while higher elevations are colonized by pinyon pines. Meadows of sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) are scattered throughout with the occasional occurrence of juniper. A wildfire in 2000; the Manter Burn, stripped the northwestern portion of the area of its mature trees.

Wildlife within the area is equally as varied as its vegetation with a wide variety of bird and small mammal species and known occurrences of large carnivores, including; black bear, mountain lion, coyote and bobcat, and important game species, such as, mule deer, mountain quail and California quail. The area contains important wildlife habitat, including cliff-top nesting sites and small pockets of riparian area.

Recreationally the area offers excellent opportunities for primitive unconfined recreation and experiences of solitude and isolation, mostly due to its location, terrain and proximity to wilderness areas. Approximately 4 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCNST) cross through the area providing access opportunities for hikers or equestrian users.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics although evidence of human activity is present within the area; it is minimal and does not impact the perception of naturalness and opportunities of solitude, (many of the routes that previously excluded this area from wilderness management have become naturally overgrown and restored). A portion of the area contains the remaining access routes to, a BLM Radio Repeater and several rangeland improvements, this area should be excluded from future restrictive wilderness characteristics management.

### **K.7.3 CHAPPELL D, PARCEL**

Located on the southern boundary of the Owens Peak wilderness, a portion of the acquisition was within the Wilderness boundary.

#### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

This area is composed of the rugged eastern face of the Sierra Nevada. Nearby Owens Peak, the high point of the southern Sierra Nevada, rises more than 8,400 feet. The mountainous terrain has deep, winding, open, and expansive canyons, many of which contain springs with extensive riparian vegetation. This area is a transition zone between the Great Basin, Mojave Desert, and Sierra Nevada ecoregions. Vegetation varies considerably with a creosote desert scrub community on the bajadas, scattered yuccas, cacti, annuals, cottonwood, and oak trees in the canyons and valleys, and a juniper-pinyon woodland with sagebrush and digger/gray pine on the upper elevations. Wildlife includes mule deer, golden eagle, and prairie falcon. Evidence of occupation by prehistoric peoples has been found throughout the area.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics when considered along with the adjacent Owens Peak Wilderness Area. The area has maintained its naturalness and the evidence and influence of humans is negligible. When considered with the Owens Peak Wilderness area, Lamont Meadow provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, isolation, and unconfined primitive recreation types.

### **K.7.4 CYRUS CANYON AUDUBON DONATION**

The Cyrus Canyon acquisition consists of 1,501 acres donated by the Audubon Society in 2008. The unit is next to the USFS Sequoia National Forest on the north and a mixture of private property and public lands on the south, east, and west. The area is approximately five miles from the community of Kernville.

#### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

The area is mostly hilly or mountainous, with some extremely rugged portions. Vegetation can be characterized as an open juniper and gray pine woodland. On the lower elevations, juniper dominates, with big sagebrush, ephedra, interior goldenbush, and cheeseweed. The flat areas between the trees and shrubs support a variety of native annual species, including lupine, lotus, and monkeyflower, along with the usual assortment of introduced Mediterranean forbs and grasses. Gray pines occur at the higher elevations and along the drainages. Other species include yucca, ceanothus, and California buckwheat. Cottonwoods and other riparian species occur along portions of Cyrus Canyon and at Andress Spring.

The area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. Mammals include mule deer, coyote, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, California ground squirrel, black-tailed hare, desert cottontail, woodrat, Pacific kangaroo rat, deer mouse, and pocket gopher. Rocks, boulders, trees, and mines provide

habitat for pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Yuma myotis, fringed-myotis, and western pipistrelle. Typical bird species include California quail, mourning dove, roadrunner, canyon wren, California thrasher, common raven, and lark sparrow. Reptiles include western fence lizard, side-blotched lizard, western whiptail, coast horned lizard, common kingsnake, and western rattlesnake.

The area is grazed, and there are some routes associated with this use. The donation was accepted with conditions attached for future management. These conditions support management for wilderness characteristics because they eliminate motorized uses and urge more primitive types of recreation.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics. Although the mix of private and public lands adjacent are neither roadless nor possess outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation, the area, when considered with the adjacent portions of the USFS-managed Sequoia National Forest, does meet the size requirements. Together these areas are considered to provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation types.

#### **K.7.5 EDGAR RANCH WEST**

The Edgar Ranch West parcel is newly acquired lands donated by the Wilderness Lands Trust for management and inclusion in existing Wilderness. The donation included portions eligible under Section 6 of the Wilderness Act for inclusion in the Sacatar Trail Wilderness. The remaining portions in Tulare County not eligible for inclusion are considered for the purpose of wilderness characteristics assessment "Edgar Ranch West".

#### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

Topography ranges from valley, canyons, and alluvial fans to steep hills that lead into granite peaks and ridgetops, reaching elevations of more than 7,800 feet. Vegetation is extremely diversified, with creosote bush, desert shrubs, and Joshua trees on the lower slopes and cacti and scattered pinyon-juniper woodlands on the upper slopes. Several of the canyons are complemented by springs, with their riparian habitats of cottonwoods, willows, and grasses. Wildlife within the area includes mule deer, golden eagle, prairie falcon, quail, and dove.

Historic use of the area as a ranch resulted in extensive fencing and route creation. Although the fencing continues to be maintained for grazing operations, most routes have naturally restored themselves since acquisition by the BLM.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics, when consideration is given with the adjacent property added to the Sacatar Trail Wilderness area. Although evidence of human activity is present

within the area, it is minimal and does not impact the perception of naturalness and opportunities of solitude.

#### **K.7.6 LAMONT MEADOW**

The Lamont Meadow parcel is next to the Owens Peak Wilderness Area, approximately 14 miles from the community of Kennedy Meadows in Tulare County. Approximately 219 acres is borders on approximately 26,000 acres of congressional designated Wilderness area.

##### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

This area is composed of the rugged eastern face of the Sierra Nevada. Nearby Owens Peak, the high point of the southern Sierra Nevada, rises more than 8,400 feet. The mountainous terrain has deep, winding, open, and expansive canyons, many of which contain springs with extensive riparian vegetation. This area is a transition zone between the Great Basin, Mojave Desert, and Sierra Nevada ecoregions. Vegetation varies considerably with a creosote desert scrub community on the bajadas, scattered yuccas, cacti, annuals, cottonwood, and oak trees in the canyons and valleys, and a juniper-pinyon woodland with sagebrush and digger/gray pine on the upper elevations. Wildlife includes mule deer, golden eagle, and prairie falcon. Evidence of occupation by prehistoric peoples has been found throughout the area.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics when considered along with the adjacent Owens Peak Wilderness Area. The area has maintained its naturalness and the evidence and influence of humans is negligible. When considered with the Owens Peak Wilderness area, Lamont Meadow provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, isolation, and unconfined primitive recreation types.

#### **K.7.7 PATTERSON BEND**

The Patterson Bend area, acquired as a number of purchases in 2005 for the purpose of completing the San Joaquin River Trail, straddles the San Joaquin River and has generally been managed since its acquisition as part of the San Joaquin River Gorge Special Recreation Management Area.

##### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

This area is composed of the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Rolling hills lead to the steep sides of the San Joaquin River Gorge.

Vegetation of the area is dominated by blue oak and grey pine with a non-native annual grass and herb understory. Other woody plants include interior live oak, scrub oak, California buckeye, California lilac, manzanita, yerba santa, mountain mahogany and poison oak. Elderberry occurs in the general area, but is not located within the project area.

Wildlife includes: California newt, California slender salamander, western spadefoot toad, Pacific tree frog, western fence lizard, California side-blotched lizard, Gilbert's skink, striped racer, common kingsnake, pacific gopher snake, pacific rattlesnake, California quail, band-tailed pigeon, mourning dove, turkey vulture, screech owl, red-tailed hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, American kestrel, red-shafted flicker, acorn woodpecker, Nuttall's woodpecker, downy woodpecker, cowbird, Brewer's black bird, brown towhee, California thrasher, American robin, scrub jay, mockingbird, northern oriole, white-crowned sparrow, violet green swallow, dark-eyed junco, yellow-rumped warbler, Bewick's wren, Anna's hummingbird, common bushtit, plain titmouse, raccoon, badger, gray fox, coyote, bobcat, California ground squirrel, western gray squirrel, California vole, Botta pocket gopher, black-tailed jackrabbit, Audubon cottontail and mule deer. Bats, such as the pallid bat, are suspected to use the area.

The federally endangered valley elderberry longhorn beetle is known to occur along the San Joaquin River. This species is completely dependent on its host plant, elderberry. As there are no elderberry plants in the immediate project area, this species is not expected to occur in the immediate project area.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics, although alone the area does not meet the size requirement, it is adjacent/within the San Joaquin River Gorge which is managed for mostly primitive recreation types. In addition the location and access difficulties may allow for some of the area to be managed for nonimpairment.

#### **K.7.8 PUBLIC PROPOSAL IV**

Located in Kern County, the area is an isolated parcel of public land next to the US Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest.

##### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

The area consists of piñon-juniper woodlands and grasslands in the northeastern corner of Los Padres National Forest near Frazier Park. San Emigdio Peak (elevation 7,495 feet) is the dominant landform, and the area looks out over the San Andreas Fault and the adjacent Wind Wolves Preserve. The area is within the historic range of the California condor, tule elk, and pronghorn, all of which have been reintroduced nearby.

The area is next to USFS Antimony Inventoried Roadless Area and part of Senator Boxer's proposed Chumash Wilderness Addition. A review of recent aerial photographs shows some bulldozer lines from fire suppression activities. Antimony is popular with hikers and bicyclists alike.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

No, the area is not deemed to contain wilderness characteristics. Although the area meets the size requirement when considered with the adjacent US Forest Service lands, the area itself has seen some disturbance reducing its qualities of naturalness and opportunities to escape the influence of human activity.

#### **K.7.9 PUBLIC PROPOSAL V**

This proposed area contained four parcels in Kern County near Lake Isabella. All the parcels are next to the Piute area of the Sequoia National Forest, managed by the US Forest Service.

##### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

Elevations in the area range from 4,500 to 8,500 feet, and the area topography is characterized by steep slopes and cliffs, moderate slopes, and subdued topography with gentle basins. Soils in the area are predominately granitic in origin, with fine sandy loam and loamy textures. The Piute Mountains have Eastside Sierra forest types. Major tree species include Jeffrey pine, white fir, black oak, singleleaf pinyon pine, and western juniper. Less common, or restricted to local areas, are gray pine, sugar pine, live oak, and blue oak.

Portions of the proposed area contain extensive motorized trail systems, which are a combination of previous authorized and designated routes and newly created routes (since 1997 when the Caliente RMP was signed).

The area is next to an Inventoried Roadless Area within the National Forest that allows road construction and reconstruction. A portion of the proposed area is within the Piute Cypress ISA ACEC.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, portions of the proposed area do contain wilderness characteristics when considered with the adjacent Inventoried Roadless Area within the National Forest. However, the extensive route system on the BLM portions of the land eliminates approximately a third of the area because naturalness and opportunities for solitude and unconfined primitive recreation types are impeded.

#### **K.7.10 ROSZEWEKA RANCH**

The Roszeweka Ranch is almost surrounded by the Scatar Trail Wilderness area, located within two miles of the community of Kennedy Meadows in Tulare County. The area, approximately 419 acres, borders on approximately 16,500 acres of congressionally designated Wilderness area.

##### ***Landscape Characteristics and Issues***

Topography ranges from valley, canyons, and alluvial fans to steep hills that lead into granite peaks and ridgetops, reaching elevations of more than 7,800 feet. Vegetation is extremely diversified, with creosote bush, desert shrubs, and Joshua trees on the lower slopes and cacti and scattered pinyon-

juniper woodlands on the upper slopes. Several of the canyons are complemented by springs, with their riparian habitats of cottonwoods, willows, and grasses. Wildlife within the area includes mule deer, golden eagle, prairie falcon, quail, and dove.

Historic use of the area as a ranch resulted in extensive fencing and route creation. Although the fencing continues to be maintained for grazing operations, most routes have naturally restored themselves since acquisition by the BLM.

**Wilderness Characteristics Assessment:** *Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?*

Yes, the area contains wilderness characteristics, when consideration is given with the adjacent Sacatar Trail Wilderness area. Although evidence of human activity is present within the area, it is minimal and does not impact the perception of naturalness and opportunities of solitude.