

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: Fremont Peak CA-080-186

Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes No N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes No N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes No N/A

Conclusion

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

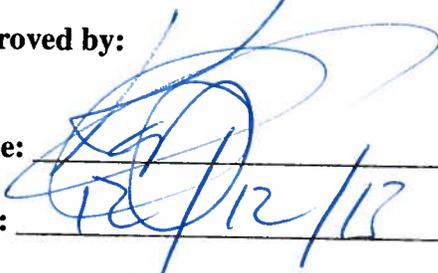
The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

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Date: 12/12

This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.

Wilderness Inventory
CDCA Wilderness Inventory Unit #186
CA-080-186-Fremont Peak
December 7, 2013

Background

Under Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLMPA) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is required to maintain an inventory of public land resources, including lands with wilderness characteristics. Wilderness characteristics are part of the resource values to be considered in inventories the BLM undertakes. The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System which identified a system of federally managed areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas". The goal of the Wilderness Act was to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefit of an enduring resource of wilderness." While the terms "wilderness character" and "wilderness characteristic" are not explicitly defined in the Wilderness Act, Section 2(c) identifies the wilderness characteristics used for evaluation of lands proposed for wilderness protections. The terms generally used to describe and evaluate lands with wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness, opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation and special features of "ecological, geological or other features of scientific, scenic or historic value."

All public lands within the California Desert District (CDD) were inventoried between 1978 and 1979 through a sequential process to determine if any of the CDD lands possessed wilderness characteristics. This process initially involved identifying Wilderness Inventory Units (WIUs) that were considered to potentially contain wilderness characteristics. Through a BLM cataloging of resources and with public involvement all the WIUs were reviewed at that time. The WIUs or portions of land within a WIU that were found to have wilderness characteristics were identified by the BLM in 1979 as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and lands not found to have wilderness characteristics were managed without wilderness considerations. A WSA is managed to maintain their wilderness suitability until Congress either designates them as wilderness or denies this designation. A final intensive study phase between 1979 and 1991, which included the preparation of mineral surveys and an environmental impact statement and additional public involvement, led the BLM to recommend to the Secretary of the Interior that some of these WSAs should be designated as wilderness and others released for other management. The Secretary then forwarded his recommendations to Congress which has taken action to designate wilderness areas and WSAs in the CDD.

Since the original wilderness characteristic inventories are more than thirty years old, they are being updated at this time. The reason for this update is to accommodate the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) in designating lands being considered for development by determining if conditions in the units have changed (i.e., do wilderness characteristics exist in

locations where they were not present in the 1979). Several management factors could result if changes are found in these units. Specific examples would be, if natural or agency-initiated reclamation projects have restored the natural conditions or if land acquisitions have restored the ability for a solitary recreation, in either case wilderness characteristics are now present and the agency might have to manage these lands for their existence.

As part of the preparation of this wilderness update, a records research was done. The permanent inventory file for WIU #186 could not be located for this review however the descriptive narrative for the unit was found in the *California Desert Conservation Area, Wilderness Inventory, Final Descriptive Narratives, March 31, 1979*

(http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pa/wilderness/wi.Par.92238.File.dat/CDCAWildernessInvNarr_Final_March1979.pdf) and the pages which describe this unit have been included

in the appendix section. Other sources of information used in the research and writing of this inventory report were: *the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980*

(http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pdfs/cdd_pdfs.Par.aa6ec747.File.pdf/CA_Desert.pdf), the 1997 Cuddleback Lake Desert Access Guide (DAG) and the Fremont Peak Sub Region Off Highway Vehicle West Mojave Supplement Map which showed open travel routes on BLM administered lands. Two field reconnaissance trips were made on August 3rd and 4th, 2013 to record and photograph the unit's environmental situation. The trips involved driving designated routes within and county roads around the unit to help redefine the 1979 boundaries.

Year 2013 CA-080-186, Fremont Peak

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

Yes

Inventory Source: 1979 Wilderness Inventory files, California Desert Conservation Area

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s): Area 186

Map Name(s)/Number(s): USDI BLM California Desert Wilderness Final Inventory, Dec. 1979

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Barstow Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

Inventory Source: 1979 Wilderness Inventory files, BLM Barstow FO

Unit#/Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
186	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Summarize any known primary reasons for prior findings in this table:

The 1979 California Desert Conservation Area inventory unit number 186 covered a large area with boundaries being U.S. Highway 395 and host of unnamed dirt roads. The area was a checkerboard ownership with no contiguous BLM lands that could qualify size-wise for a wilderness consideration. With this exclusion of size, no other findings were explored for this unit and further consideration for wilderness qualities was not pursued.

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-186, Fremont Peak

(1) Sufficient size

Acreage: The rough estimate of Area 186 is 122,955 acres pending a GIS calculation with a perimeter of 63.5 miles long.

Boundaries: The area has the same boundaries today that were present in the 1979 inventory. The western boundary is U.S. Highway 395. The northern boundary is Cuddleback Road a partially maintained dirt road. The eastern boundary is an unmaintained dirt road locally called Black Canyon Road. The southern boundary is maintenance road.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: The unit is checker-boarded throughout with roughly half the unit being managed by BLM.

Location: Area 186 is located in the north central San Bernardino County in the northeastern section of the Barstow Resource Area. The area is roughly thirty miles northwest of the City of Barstow, CA and directly west of the Black Mountain Wilderness Area.

Topography: The unit has a large mountain structure, Fremont Peak, located in the northwestern section. There are a plethora of hills and associated washes within the unit. Outside of the hills and mountains this area becomes flat with long stretches of open plain interrupted by washes with soils being rocky to sandy.

Vegetation features: The dominant vegetation type throughout the area is creosote bush scrub. Creosote ranges from scarce with spots of bare ground between the plants to sections where the creosotes bushes grow closer together and mingled with various grass species.

Major human uses/activities: Semi-primitive motorized recreation which includes all types of off-highway vehicular (OHV) use on designated routes. Other recreational uses include camping and rock-hounding.

(2) Natural condition

No

This unit is checker-boarded between public and private lands. There has been active mining in the unit and there are various routes and dirt roads scattered throughout. The increase of off-highway vehicle (OHV) use has also lessened the natural area's appearance.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

No

The unit has seen an increased level of public off-highway vehicle (OHV) use with many new/illegal tracks seen from the boundaries and through exploration of the interior. The lack of screening through vegetation and terrain also decreases the possibility of solitude.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

No

This unit is crisscrossed with OHV routes (both legal and illegal) and makes it the significant recreational pursuit making primitive recreation difficult.

(5) Supplemental values

Yes

Fremont Peak is located within this unit and many of the mines in the area are a reflection of California's rich history of mineral exploration.

Appendix A

Route Analysis of Area 186

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
FP 5175	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
FP 5170	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
Fremont Peak Road	County Road				Bladed			Roadside Berms
FP 5392	Old Mining Road	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	Machinery	Roadside Berms
FP 5364	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
Hoffman Road	County Road				Two Track			Roadside Berms
BM 6381	Inholdings	UK	UK	N	Two Track			
BM 6364	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
BM 6265	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
BM 6251	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			
BM 6265A	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track			

Appendix B

Photo Log of Area 186



Photo #1 - South of Cuddleback Road on Designated Route FP5155 - Southeast View



Photo #2 - Junction of Designated Route FP5175 and Cuddleback Road - Northeast View



Photo #3 - Junction of Designated Routes HL6265 & HL7159 - Northeast View



Photo #4 - Junction of Designated Routes FP7159 & FP5389 - Northern View



Photo #5 - Junction of Designated Route FP7159 & US395 - Northern View



Photo #6 - Junction of Designated Route FP5120 & US395 - Eastern View



Photo #7 - Fremont Peak Road - Eastern View

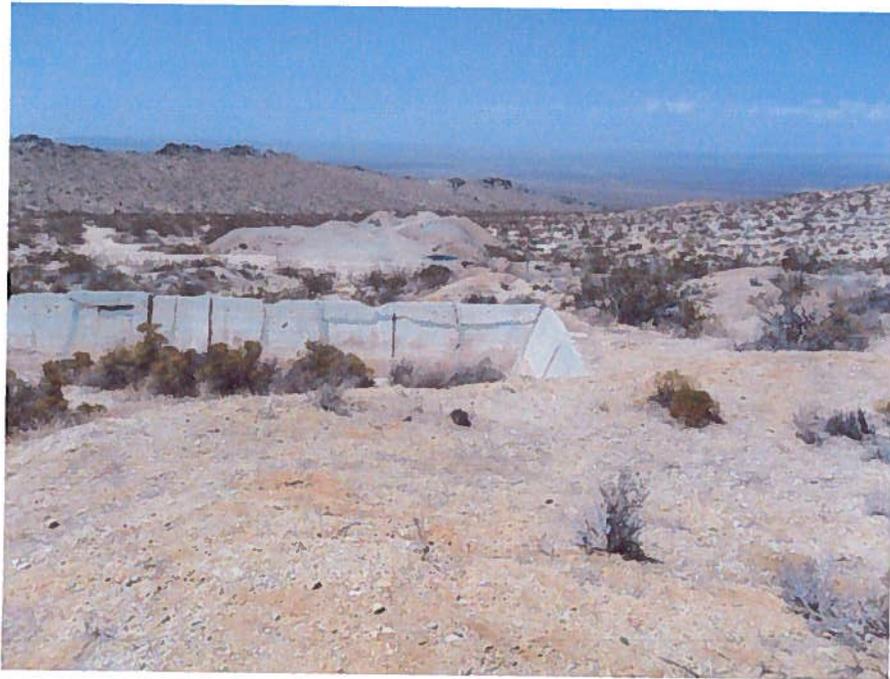


Photo #8 - Base of Fremont Peak - Western View



Photo #9 - Cuddleback Road - Northeastern View



Photo #10 - Along Designated Route FP6265 - Western View



Photo #11 - Black Canyon Wash - Northeastern View

Area 186 Photo Log

Photo #	GPS	Town & Range	Dir	Description
1	3894406 N 447478 E	T 31 S R 41 E Sec 34	SE	South of Cuddleback Road on FP5155, Old Railroad Line, Old Concrete Base, Creosote Scrub, Sandy Pebbly Loam
2	3895865 N 452305 E	T 31 S R 42 E Sec 30	NE	FP5175 and Cuddleback Road, View of Fremont Peak in Distance, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
3	3882274 N 476326 E	T 12 N R 4 W Sec 35	NE	HL6265 & HL7159, SE corner of Area, Scarce Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
4	3882516 N 463355 E	T 12 N R 5 W Sec 33	N	FP7159 & FP5389, Southern Boundary, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
5	3882895 N 448274 E	T 12 N R 7 W Sec 36	N	FP7159 & US395, SW corner, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
6	3890244 N 446875 E	T 32 S R 41 E Sec 16	E	FP5120 & US395, Western Boundary, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
7	3894951 N 451833 E	T 31 S R 41 E Sec 36	E	Fremont Peak Road, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
8	3894947 N 457918 E	T 31 S R 42 E Sec 34	W	Fremont Peak Base, Old Mining Area, Mountainous, Downslope, Creosote Scrub, Rocky Sandy Loam
9	3897814 N 454553 E	T 31 S R 44 E Sec 20	NE	Cuddleback Road, Hilly & Rocky, Downslope, Joshua Trees, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
10	3901078 N 477332 E	T 31 S R 44 E Sec 10	W	FP6265, NW corner, Wash, Rolling Hills, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam
11	3887655 N 476143 E	T 31 S R 44 E Sec 21	NE	Black Canyon Wash, FP6265, Western Boundary, Creosote Scrub, Pebbly Sandy Loam

Appendix C

BLM California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Final Inventory, Dec. 1979

Written Description & Map of Area 186

AREA 186

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary is a pipeline which runs parallel to U.S. 395. The northern border is a maintained dirt road to Cuddeback Gunnery Range which continues to the southwest corner of the U.S. Naval Weapons Center. The eastern boundary is another dirt road from the southwest corner of the Naval Weapons Center south through Black Canyon to the telephone cable road which is the southern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area has checkerboard ownership, with non-public sections covering approximately 65 percent of the total area. The area does not contain 5000 acres or more of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority were general comments on various recreational interests in the area. A few comments addressed the natural condition.

AREA 186A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east by Copper City Road. The southern boundary is a maintained dirt road through Coolgardie Camp. The west boundary is a graded dirt road to mining activity north of Murphy's Well and further into Superior Valley. The northern boundary is composed of several connecting maintained dirt roads south of Superior Lake.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 45 percent public land. Non-public sections occur in a checkerboard pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area encompasses a portion of Superior Valley to the north and scattered hills and buttes on the south slope. The vegetative communities range from Alkali Sink in the Superior Lake area through creosote scrub and Joshua tree woodland toward Coolgardie Camp. Elevations range from 3000 feet in Superior Valley to 3800 feet on the desert floor and up to 4082 feet on the scattered buttes. The terrain is extremely even, with exception of the buttes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

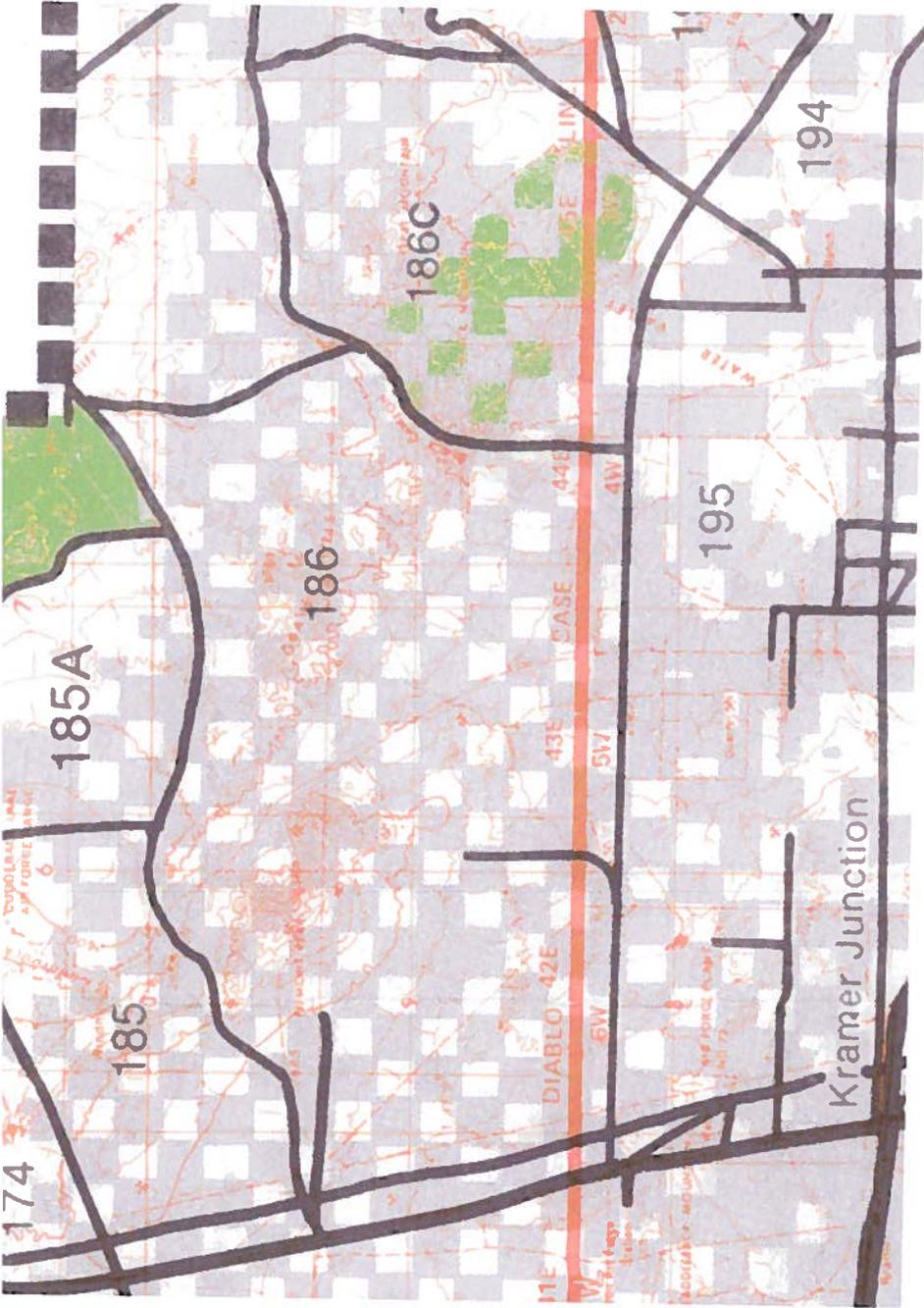
Several ways cross this area as access to inhabited and uninhabited mining claims scattered around the bases of the buttes. The impacts are substantially noticeable where man remains and is not just a visitor. Other impacts include a large, active pumice pit and quarry north of Murphy's Well and mining and milling activity at Coolgardie Camp where human habitation is also evident. Checkerboard land status over much of the area allows easy land access. As a result, houses and other signs of human habitation are scattered over the east half, from Coolgardie Camp north to Wells Hill.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The buttes in the area are simple hills with no canyons or ridge systems to provide screening from the scattered human habitations or from other visitors. Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the portions where man remains an inhabitant. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are also limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received agreed with the findings.



Appendix D

Current Land Status Map of Area 186

