

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: Unit Name CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Summary: CA-080-149-2 is primarily public with few impacts to the natural characteristics localized to the borders of the unit. The topography of Dublin Hills and surrounding bajadas offer plenty of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Supplemental values includes fossils providing an excellent teaching and research setting for many universities. The area also contains the Shoshone Spring and historic Dublin Hills cabins carved into the hillside, an important historical feature.

Results of Analysis:

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

Conclusion

[X] 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 (team members):

Timothy Hough, Wilderness Specialist, Barstow Field Office
E. Leigh Knudsen, Resource Inventory Team, Program Coordinator, BLM California State office
Birgit Hover, Realty Specialist, BLM Barstow FO
Brad Mastin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Barstow FO
Hannah Morris, Resource Inventory Team, California Desert District,
Erin Mounce, Resource Inventory Team, California Desert District
Brendan O'Connor, Resource Inventory Team, California Desert District
2/25/2015

Approved by:

Name:

Date:

[Handwritten signature and date 3/13/15]

Title:

[Handwritten title: Barstow Field Manager]



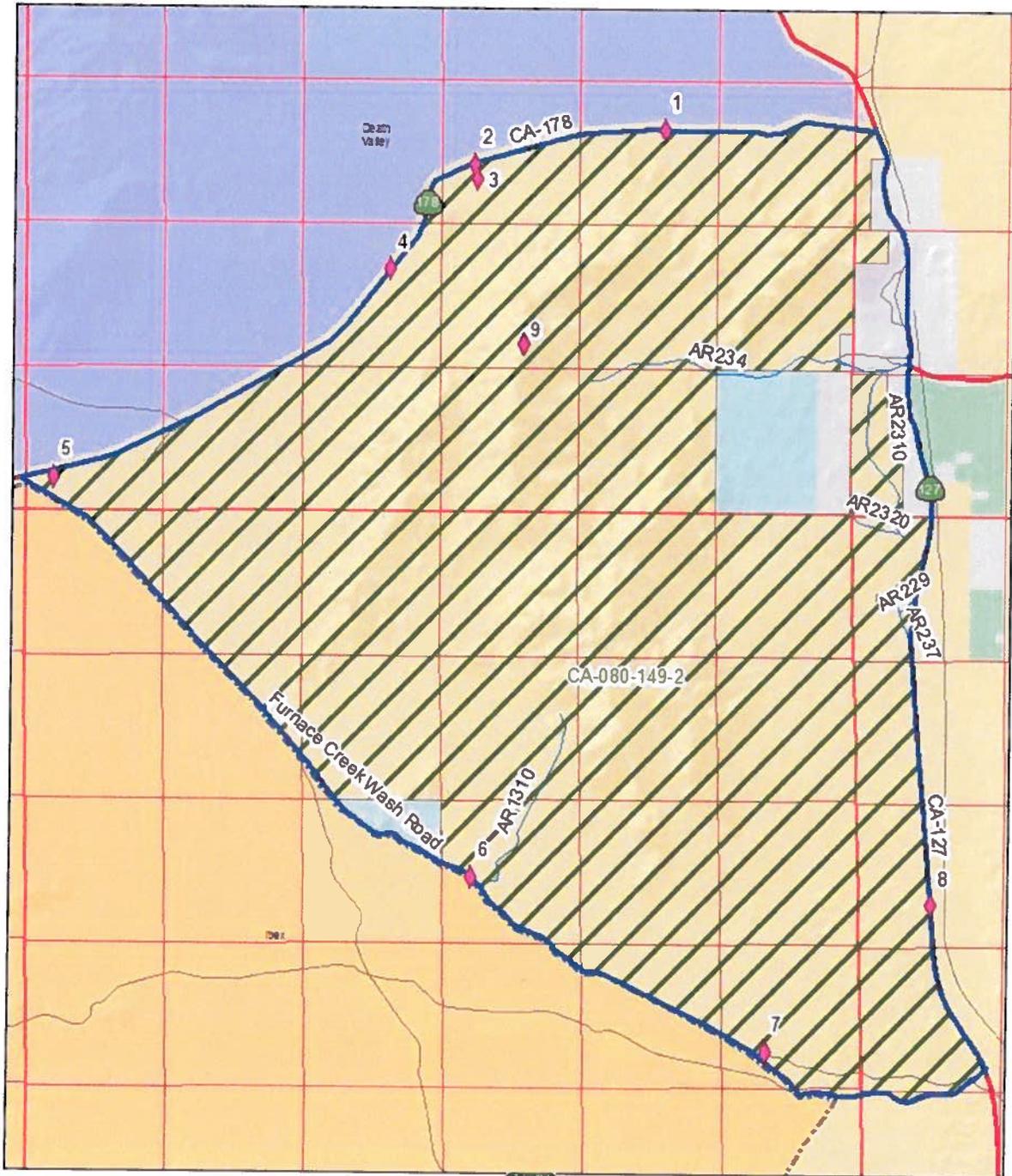
CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills Orientation

Federal Wilderness Managing Agency		Land Management Agency	
	Bureau of Land Management		Bureau of Land Management
	US Forest Service		Forest Service
	National Park Service		National Park Service
	US Fish and Wildlife Service		Fish and Wildlife Service
			Bureau of Reclamation
			Bureau of Indian Affairs
			Department of Defense
			Other Federal
			State

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

<p> Photo Points</p> <p> Borders</p> <p> Open Routes</p> <p>CA-080-149-2</p> <p>Lands with Wilderness Characteristics</p> <p> Yes</p>	<p>Land Management Agency</p> <p> Bureau of Land Management</p> <p> National Park Service</p> <p> Fish and Wildlife Service</p> <p> State</p> <p> Private</p>	<p>Federal Wilderness Agency</p> <p> Bureau of Land Management</p> <p> National Park Service</p>	<p>No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.</p> <p>Scale 1:75,000 when printed at 8x11"</p> <p> 0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles</p>
---	--	---	--



FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory 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): CA-080-149 Ibex Hills

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: March 31, 1979 Wilderness Inventory Final Descriptive Narratives
1990 Statewide Wilderness Study Report

Unit#/ Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
149	39,111	Y	Y	Y	
149	39,111	N	Y	Y	Y

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

(1) Sufficient size: Yes X No Total Acreage: 17,400 acres

Boundaries: 149-2 is a triangularly shaped unit. It is bounded on the Northwest by Highway 178, to the southwest by Furnace Creek Wash Road, and to the East by Highway 127.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: There are 16,275 acres of public land. There is a section of State Land in the center NE portion (472 acres), and a tiny piece along the SW boundary (119 acres). The eastern quarter section within the State land parcel is private. There are a total of 534 acres of private land in the NE portion around the town of Shoshone, and a tiny piece just south of Shoshone.

Location: South-central Inyo County, immediately southwest of Shoshone; adjacent to Highway 127 between Death Valley National Park and the Nevada state line.

Topography: The dominant feature of this unit is the jagged and rugged Dublin Hills. The hills run north south and spread out to the west filling most of the unit. The east side of the hills run out down onto a relatively short bajada before draining into the nearby Amargosa River. Highway 127 runs along the eastern side at the base of the bajada, between the hills and the river. There are thick mud deposits throughout the basin and around the edges. These deposits have been found to contain numerous fossils.

On the northern side of the hills is a gradual valley that rises to the west and north forming a gentle sloping valley that Highway 178 runs through into southern Death Valley. The center-western portion of the unit gradually slopes south and east draining lands to the north and west down to the Amargosa River. There are several shallow washes and drainages that converge in this area, including those draining the entire eastern side of the IbeX Hills. The water gradually flows into one channel forming the steep walled Furnace Creek Wash.

Vegetation features: The dominant vegetative type throughout the unit is a Creosote bush scrub plant community. The composition, density and dispersion rates vary by species. Starting at the top of the Dublin Hills and moving downhill there are more cactus species and fewer herbaceous shrubs. The cacti include large and very well formed barrel cactus and numerous species of cholla. The bajada around the base of the mountains supports a healthy stand of creosote with larger and a wider variety shrubs and small trees in the drainages and washes. This includes desert fir, desert marigolds, Mormon tea, cheeshbush, burrobush, yucca, and occasional mesquite.

Major human uses/activities: The most popular activities in this unit are hiking and desert exploration in the NE corner around the town of Shoshone. The town receives a daily influx of

new visitors due to the draw of the national and international tourism opportunities available here. This unit is popular with visitors who routinely hike, explore, ride horseback, bird watch, photograph, or just sit and enjoy the setting. The hill immediately adjacent to Shoshone is climbed and photographed on a regular basis.

There is a fair amount of annual camping in the southern tip along Furnace Creek Wash Road. This area has been a popular spot for winter snow birds to camp at for decades. The mud flats along the western flank are a popular teaching setting for colleges and universities around the country. This area is studied for the unique combination of ancient fossils found in the mud hills

(2) Natural condition: Yes X No _____

The area appears to be in a natural condition affected primarily by the forces of nature. Nearly all the public lands in this unit have retained their primeval condition and are undisturbed. There are a variety of small disturbances along the peripheral edges of the unit, however these are localized and do not substantially detract from the areas overall natural appearance.

The most significant disturbance to the natural condition of the area is the town of Shoshone in the northeast corner of the unit.

Moving west further up the canyon behind the town runs designated open route AR234. There are few other noticeable impacts in the canyon. There is a barely noticeable temporary scientific instrument located in a small fenced enclosure. Some of the rocks were painted white to spell out the letters DV on the large hill at the north end of town. In the northern corner, along Highway 178, there are several hillsides scrapped by a dozer blade exploring for mineral potential shown in photo points 1-3.

There is a little used designated open route, AR1310, in the lower portion coming up into the area from Furnace Creek Wash Road. Restoration crews working in this area closed and restored many of the previous routes several years ago. The route was cherry-stemmed on the map in Appendix D to avoid impacting the core inner natural area. There are numerous vehicle tracks and old roadways to the side that parallel Highway 127. These only affect the area immediately adjacent to the highway.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude: Yes X No _____

The landscape is varied throughout this unit. There are steep rocky mountains, broad wide sandy washes, volcanic rock and gently sloping bajadas. All these landforms offer numerous opportunities to escape the sights and sounds of other humans to find solitude with ease. The mud hills west of Highway 127 offer a veritable maze of canyons that swallow all sights and sounds. Here the visitor can find themselves alone in a quiet narrow canyon between 2 walls of dried mud. In Shoshone, moving up one of the nearby washes or into the hills easily leaves behind the sights and sounds of the town and other people. The north and east side provide vast undisturbed vistas that viscerally remind visitors how remote this area is, and how far from other civilization they are.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation: Yes **X** No ___

The landscape here appears varied with numerous interesting and challenging features. The hills are rocky, rugged and steep enough to attract day climbing and hiking. The canyons are large enough to spend an entire day exploring. The overall size of the area is a bit confining because the area is only about 5 miles wide. However, the layout requires navigating a circuitous route through canyons and over hills to get anywhere. This landscape requires the expenditure of more energy and due to the steep features, creates the perception the area is much larger.

(5) Supplemental values: Yes **X** No ___

The lower slopes, the bajada and the mud hills along the eastern flank of the hills contain large amounts of fossils. The nation's colleges and universities use this area extensively as an outdoor teaching setting. There is also a small amount of on-going scientific exploration in this area related to the topics of: geology, botany, weather, the natural sciences and the under-ground flow of water. This area contains one of the Amargosa River largest spring systems, the Shoshone Spring. This water source supplies the entire town with the overflow draining into the riverbed. Due west of the town is the site of the historic Dublin Hills cabins, a series of caves carved into the hillside for use as residences by miners. These improvements and the rest of the town are on private land.

Appendix C
Route Analysis of Area 149-2

A brief route analysis was completed for this unit because the designated open routes were excluded from the core area determined to have wilderness characteristics. There are several old historic trails, ways and roads located around the perimeter of the area. These roads are in various stages of eroding, and are gradually disappearing from the landscape. Some roads in this area have evidence of previous mechanical construction or maintenance, in particular the old highway parallel to 127 and the road into Dublin Gulch. The designated open routes were excluded from the new area that was drawn in the map at the beginning of this document to include the lands that appear natural. Many roads, ways and routes were closed in this unit and it is apparent several of these were restored and there is little evidence of them today. A few show signs of traffic. There are numerous random sets of vehicle tracks all around the perimeter from visitors who choose on a whim to drive off-road. The unit does meet the other requirements for the finding of lands with wilderness characteristics.

Route #	Purpose	ROW	Constructed or Improved Mechanically	Is it in regular and continuous use	Maintenance if needed	WIU Road
AR234	access	N	Yes	No	No	No
AR2310 AR2320	mine & resident access		Yes	No	No	No
AR229	old highway		Yes	No	No	No
AR1310	mining		Yes	No	No	No

**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY
APPENDIX B – PHOTO LOG**

Photographer(s): **Hannah Morris and Erin Mounce**
Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **CA-080-149-2**

Date	Frame #	Camera Direction	Description	GPS/UTM Location	Township	Range	Sec.	Photo Point #
2/24/15		South	Along Highway 178 north side of the unit	35.996164 N 116.302176W	22N	6E	23	1
2/24/15		Southeast	Along Highway 178	35.992505 N 116.326534W	22N	6E	22	2
2/24/15		Northeast	Just inside the north side of the unit off of Highway 178	35.991047N 116.326212W	22N	6E	22	3
2/24/15		Northeast	Along Highway 178	35.981961 N 116.337207W	22N	6E	28	4
2/24/15	2	Southeast East	Near the intersection of Highway 178 and Furnace Creek Wash Road.	35.960674 N 116.380109W	22N	6E	31	5
2/24/15	2	North Northeast	Along Furnace Creek Wash Road	35.920491 N 116.326109W	21N	6E	15	6
2/24/15		North	In the southeast corner along Furnace Creek Wash road	35.903057 N 116.288095W	21N	6E	24	7

CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Date	Frame #	Camera Direction	Description	GPS/UTM Location	Township	Range	Sec.	Photo Point #
2/24/15		West	Along Highway 127 in the southeast corner	35.917993 N 116.266907W	21N	7E	18	8
2/7/15	4	Southwest West Northwest and Northeast	Atop Beck's Peak, highest peak of Dublin Hills	35.974587N 116.319846W	22N	6E	27	9

Photo Point 1: Facing South, visible closed, graded routes on hillside, localized to this area does not affect the naturalness of the unit. 2/24/2015



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 2: Facing southeast. Graded route leading into the unit. Not signed but is a closed route. It is not regularly or frequently used. Leads only to photo point 3. 2/24/2015



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 3: Facing northeast, old paved highway that is deteriorating. Not visible from road or from Beck's Point (photo point 9 Frame 3). Not a wilderness inventory road but does affect naturalness of the area. 2/24/2015



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo point 4: Facing East, natural bajada primarily shaped by that forces of nature. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 5 Frame 1: facing southeast, a closed but graded route in the western most corner of the unit. Also not in regular or continuous use. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point Frame 2: Facing East showing the landscape of Dublin Hills as a whole, no noticeable human impacts leaving a prominently natural landscape. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 6 Frame 1: Facing north, natural bajada leading to Dublin Hills primarily natural landscape. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 6 Frame 2: Facing northeast, natural bajada leading to Dublin Hills primarily natural landscape. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 7: Facing north, natural bajada and Dublin Hills. 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 8: Facing West from 127 into the southern tip of the unit, depicts natural hilly area. Dublin Hills, to the north, visible in the left side of the photo 2/24/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 9 Frame 1: Facing west by south. Highway 178 is visible and the bajada and hills in the foreground are natural. 2/7/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 9 Frame 2: Facing West Highway 178 is visible and the bajada is natural. 2/7/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 9 Frame 3: Facing North Highway 178 visible and the graded area from photo points 3 and 4 is hardly noticeable in the center of the photo 2/7/15



CA-080-149-2 Dublin Hills

Photo Point 9 Frame 4: Facing Northeast, Route AR234 visible in the lower right corner but hardly noticeable among the washes. Area primarily natural 2/7/15



Wilderness Study Report 1990

IBEX HILLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-149)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 40,597 acres

The Ibx Hills WSA is located in Inyo County within the northeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Shoshone is three miles to the east. The WSA includes 39,111 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,465 acres owned by the State of California, and 21 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of the WSA is State Route 178. Death Valley National Monument (DVM) forms the western and southern boundary. The eastern boundary follows the ridgeline of the Ibx Hills north to Ibx Peak, turns east and crosses Greenwater Valley and then turns north again through the Dublin Hills. The boundary then turns west to join State Route 178. Portions of the WSA are within a future utility corridor (1990-2020) identified for the State of California in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980).

The WSA includes portions of the Ibx Hills, Dublin Hills, and Black Mountains which have a general north-south orientation. A segment of Greenwater Valley, which is two to four miles wide and six to eight miles long, separates the Dublin Hills from the Ibx Hills. The Black Mountains and the Ibx Hills are very rugged mountain ranges; elevations in the WSA ascend from 888 feet to 4,752 feet at Ibx Peak within six miles. Through the horizontal rock layers of these mountain ranges, the colors of brown, bright red, yellow and black produce a distinctive scenic affect. The vegetative composition within the WSA includes the typical creosote bush scrub assemblage that exhibits some variability based on elevation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 0 acres recommended for wilderness
39,111 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Ibx Hills WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Under this recommendation, future activities in the area will be controlled by a combination of intensive and moderate levels of management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan.

The high potential mineral and energy resources of the WSA are of greater value than the significance of the area as wilderness. The large number of existing routes of travel that impact naturalness in the northern portion of the WSA also influenced the nonsuitable recommendation. Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. There are approximately 35.5 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The "heart" of the WSA has a long history of mineral production and contains a patented mining property. Previous mines have produced marketable quantities of lead, zinc, silver, copper and gold. Portions of the WSA have high potentials for the occurrence of lead, talc, copper, zinc, gold and silver, as well as geothermal resources. Other portions have moderate potentials for pumice, clay, zeolites, and perlite. Seven hundred and sixty acres of the WSA are encumbered with mining claims. These claims are concentrated in the areas of high mineral potentials. Given the history of the area, the likelihood for a major discovery and/or valid, existing mineral rights is considered to be extremely high.

One of the inholdings owned by the State of California in the southern portion of the WSA (640 acres) contains a past producing mine as well has high potentials for lead, talc, copper, zinc, gold, and silver. Full mineral development of this land would adversely impact wilderness values in the southern portion of the WSA.

The wilderness values are compromised by over 35 miles of existing routes of travel within the boundaries of the WSA. These routes are predominately in the valley portions of the area and include a designated "county-maintained" road. However, there is a route through Sheephead Pass and several routes in the northwestern and southern portion of the WSA that provide access to historic mines and high mineral potential areas.

No significant resources of DWNM would be impacted by the nonwilderness recommendation. Adjacent portions of the National Monument contain administratively endorsed wilderness. While designation of this WSA as wilderness would compliment the existing management of the Monument, the wilderness values within the Monument are sufficient to stand on their own merit without this WSA.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The area does, however, support transient habitat for desert bighorn sheep. The WSA contains an area of high cultural resource sensitivity and represents land traditionally used by the Panamint Shoshone and Chemehuevi. An historic trail with talc, sumac, and Datura meteloides collection sites passes through the center of the area in an east to west direction.

The WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and a combination of intense and moderate management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. The mineral wealth of the area could be fully explored and developed. Reasonable mitigating measure would be applied to protect impacted resources.

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

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	39,111
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,465
Private		21
Total		<u>40,597</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness 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)	39,111
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>39,111</u>

California Desert Conservation Area - Wilderness Inventory FINAL Map-1979

