

**6310 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory
Summary of Findings and Conclusions**

Area Unique Identifier: CA-080-193 Rainbow Basin

Summary: A portion of the Rainbow Basin wilderness inventory unit (193-1) meets the requirements for lands with wilderness characteristics. The remainder of the unit (193-2) containing the popular Owl Canyon Campground and Rainbow Basin scenic loop are excluded because human uses impacts to naturalness. The subunit 193-1 possesses wilderness characteristics.

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 lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

Tim Hough, Wilderness Specialist, Barstow Field Office

E. Leigh Knudsen, Resource Inventory Team, Program Coordinator, BLM California State office

Daniel Maus, Resource Inventory Team, BLM California Desert District

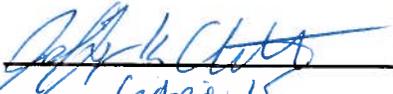
Hannah Morris, Resource Inventory Team, BLM California Desert District

Erin Mounce, Resource Inventory Team, BLM California Desert District

Brendan O'Connor, Resource Inventory Team, BLM California Desert District

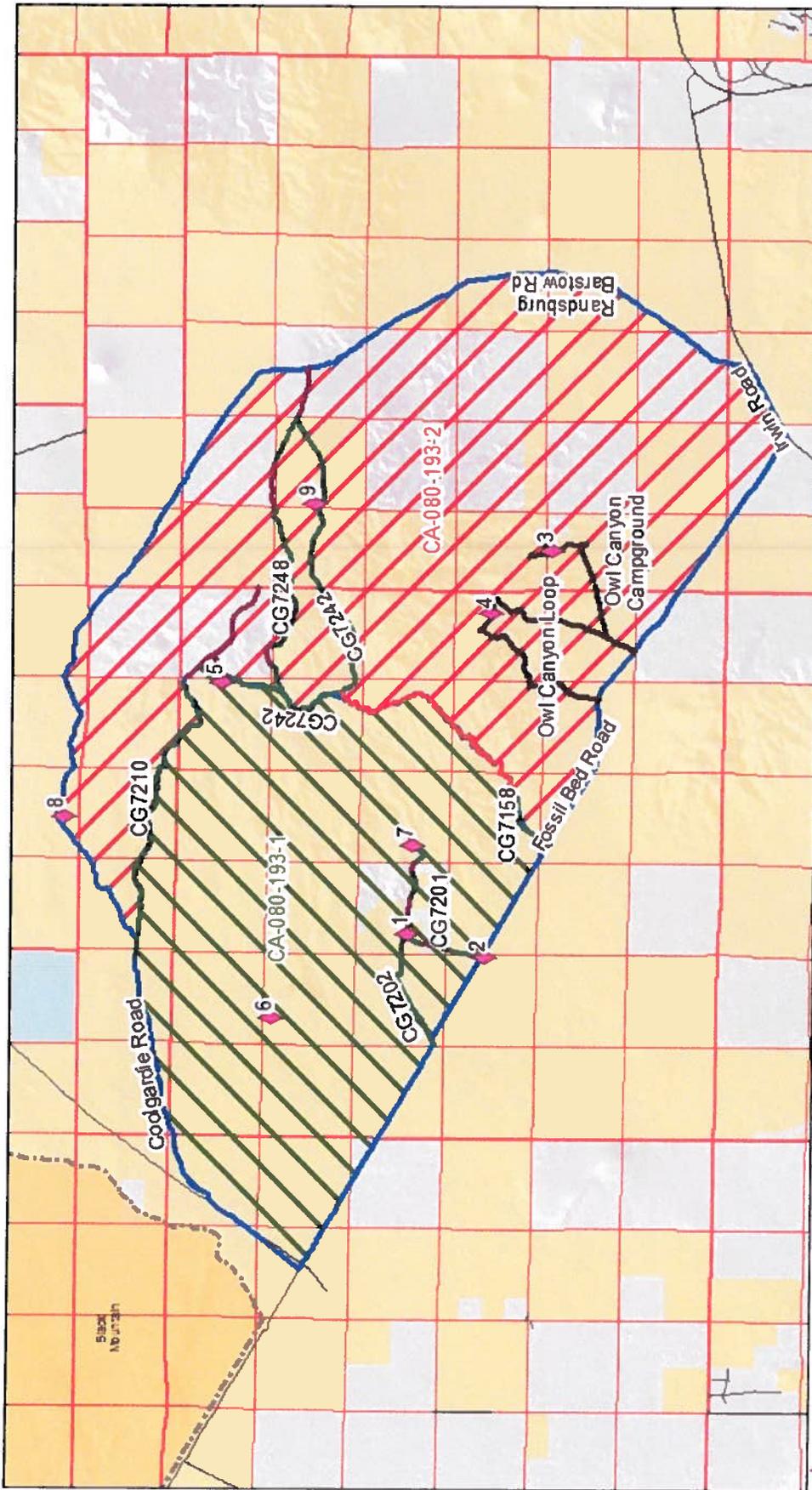
December 2014

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: 

Title: Acky Field manager

Date: Apr 15



CA-080-193 Rainbow Basin
 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



Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

- NO
- YES

Federal Wilderness Management Agency

- Bureau of Land Management

Land Management Agency

- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Defense
- State
- Undesignated

Routes Designations

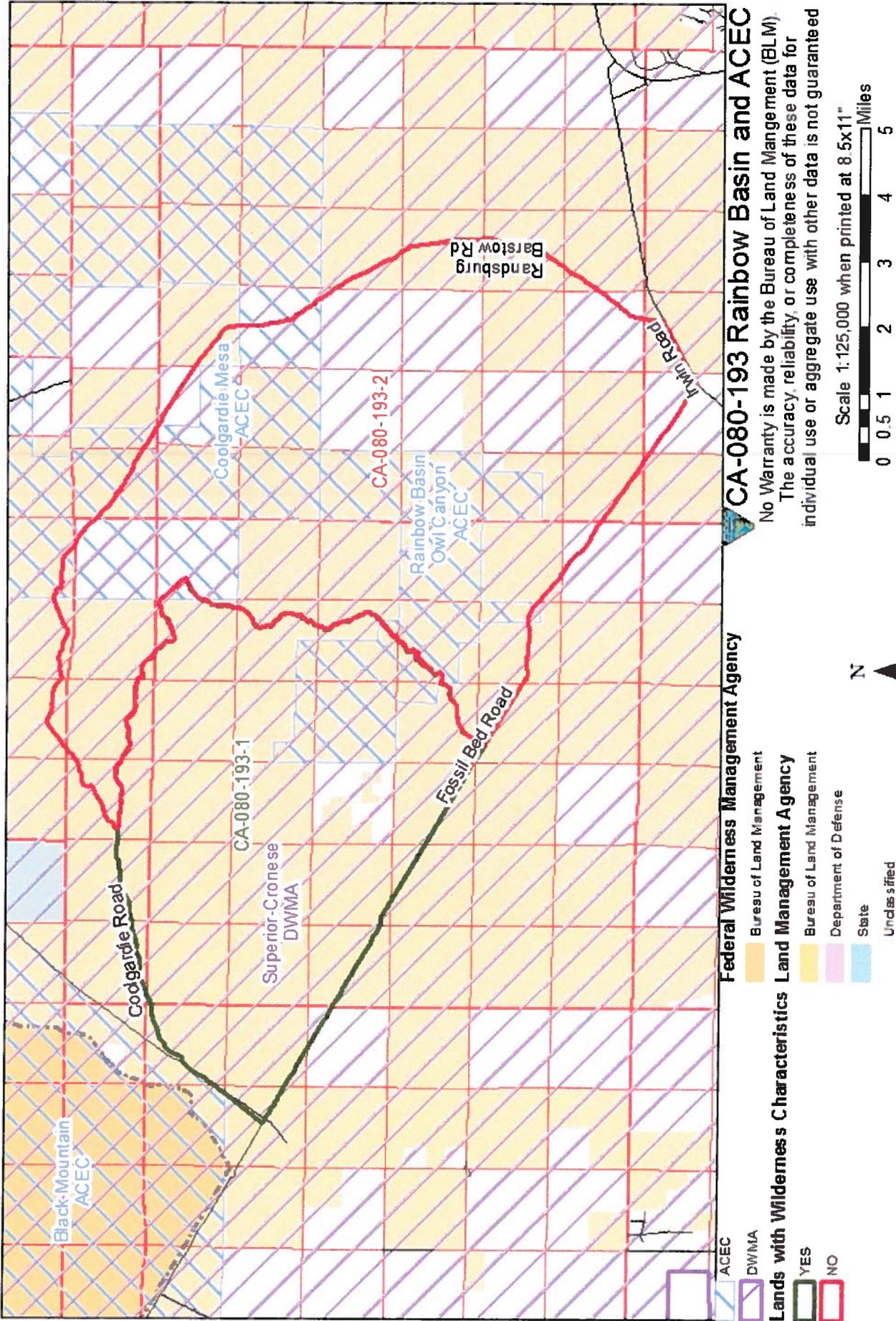
- Undesignated
- Access Limited or Seasonally Closed
- Closed for All Vehicles
- Open to All Vehicles

Photo Points

-



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin



FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record

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

No (Go to Form 2) Yes (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.):

a) Inventory Source: California Desert Conservation Area - Wilderness Inventory - Final Descriptive Narratives - March 31, 1979

b) Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): CA-080-193

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): California Desert Access Guides: Cuddeback Lake(1997), Soda Mountains, Victorville (2012), and Newberry Springs Surface Management Status, 1:100,000, 2008. BLM iPad/ EGIS SCA RIT Team

d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): California Desert District, Barstow Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

Natural Condition:

BLM maintains a 31-space improved campground in Owl Canyon, near Fossil Bed Road in the south-central region. In neighboring Rainbow Basin, which has been designated as a Natural Landmark, a maintained loop provides access to this area, where the richly colored sedimentary layers have yielded notable fossils. Off-road vehicle use is the predominant form of recreation in the area. Impacts from this type of use are substantially noticeable wherever access is possible through canyons, over the less rocky slopes, and across the alluvial areas. North of the hills, the Joshua Tree Woodland is laced with primitive routes. This has traditionally been a favorite recreation area, where roads and primitive routes have had a significant impact upon primeval character and influence of the land. Fire pits, burnt Joshua Trees and vehicle tracks dominate; mining activity is limited to a few small prospects.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation:

The canyons provide adequate screening from other visitors and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Diversity in types of primitive recreation is also available. However, the area has been severely impacted throughout by the use of off-road vehicles. Primitive routes which literally lace some portions of the road less area severely limit potential for unconfined types of recreation.

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
193	Y	N	Y	N	N/A

CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: **CA-080-193 Rainbow Basin**

Total Acreage: 30,861

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes X No

Description: The northern boundary of 193 follows Coolgardie Road, CG7256, CG7206 and CG7210 as one travels from east to west. The eastern boundary follows Irwin Road and CG7171. The western boundary follows open route BM6285. The southern boundary follows Fossil Bed Road also known as HL7159. As a portion of the unit was not natural, it was subsequently subdivided into 193-1 and 193-2.

Area 193-1 is bounded to the north by open route CG7210. The eastern boundary follows routes CG7242 a closed route, and open route CG7158. The southern boundary runs along Fossil Bed Road, HL7159, until meeting with the western boundary, BM6285 or Coolgardie Road. The total land of area 193-1 is 12,167 acres.

Area 193-2 is bounded to the north by Coolgardie Road and CG7206. The western boundary follows CG7210, CG7158 and CG7242. The southern boundary runs along Fossil Bed Road, HL7159. The east is bounded by Irwin Road and CG7171 also known as Randsburg Barstow Road or Copper City Road. The total land in this area is 18,563 acres.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No N/A

Description:

193-1 in the south west portion of 193 was found to appear to be natural. The remainder of the unit 193-2 was excluded do to the substantially noticeable impacts of man.

Land ownership: Wilderness inventory unit (WIU) 193-1 is predominantly public lands with only a portion of sections 1, 13 and 16, T11N R2W being privately owned (464 acres). Unit 193-1 has 11,703 acres of contiguous BLM land.

Location: Wilderness inventory unit 193-1 is located in the Coolgardie Subregion, southeast of Black Mountain Wilderness, and northwest of Calico Mountains National Recreation Lands in Barstow, CA.

Topography: The wilderness inventory unit is comprised of Rainbow Basin, Fossil, Coon and Owl Canyons, and the Mud Hills. Large washes, valleys and ravines are prominent throughout 193-1, adding to the diverse topography.

Vegetation: This unit contains part of Rainbow Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The density of vegetation varies throughout the unit, and consists of joshua trees, creosote, rabbitbrush, and other creosote scrub community species.

CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Major human uses/activities: 193-1 is within a limited use area, with the open routes but primitive routes CG7201 and CG7202 running into the unit. These routes coincide with washes, or are within small valleys, making their effects largely unnoticeable. The land is primarily affected by the forces of nature.

In 193-2 there is a power line that bisects the east side of the polygon from Fossil Bed Rd to the northern boundary. The area also has noticeable man-made incursions for flood control. BLM manages Owl Canyon campground in the south eastern area, which includes maintained roads for the campground and the Rainbow Basin Loop. The wilderness inventory unit is a limited use area; however major primitive routes from off highway vehicle use can be detected throughout 193-2. Mining activities and claims are substantially noticeable along the eastern and northern boundaries. For these reasons, this subsection is primarily unnatural and will not be considered for lands with wilderness characteristics.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes No N/A

Description: The many canyons, hills, washes and bluffs allow for plenty of topographic screening. The wilderness inventory unit feels exceptionally vast.. Both of these factors ensure outstanding opportunities for solitude.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes No N/A

Description: Although opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, like hiking, were present within 193-1 they were not found to meet the outstanding threshold.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes No N/A

Description: A portion of 193-1 is within the Rainbow Basin/Owl Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern, ACEC, present for the protection of the landscape features and paleontological resources of the area, as well as Lane Mountain milkvetch, the prairie falcon and the Mohave ground squirrel. The unit is also part of the Superior-Cronese Desert Wildlife Management Area, DWMA, which was designated for the protection of the desert tortoise, the Mojave ground squirrel and other declining wildlife species.

**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY
APPENDIX C -- ROUTE ANALYSIS¹**

Route #	Purpose	ROW	Constructed or Improved Mechanically	Is it in regular and continuous use	Maintenance if needed	WIU Road
CG7201	Recreation	No	No	Yes	No	No
CG7202	Wash	No	No-within a wash	Yes	No	No
CG7207	Recreation	No	No	No	No	No
Owl Canyon Loop	Recreation; access to Rainbow Basin Natural Area	No	Yes--graded, large berms	Yes	Yes	Yes
Owl Canyon Campground Rd.	Recreation; access to campground	No	Yes--graded, large berms, erosion control devices	Yes	Yes	Yes
CG7248	Recreation	No	Not Inventoried	Not Inventoried	The BLM may maintain this route	Unknown
CG7242	Recreation	No	Not Inventoried	Not Inventoried	The BLM may maintain this route	Unknown
CG7210	Recreation	No	Not Inventoried	Not Inventoried	The BLM may maintain this route	Unknown

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

Photographer(s): Resource Inventory Team

Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **CA-080-193 Rainbow Basin**

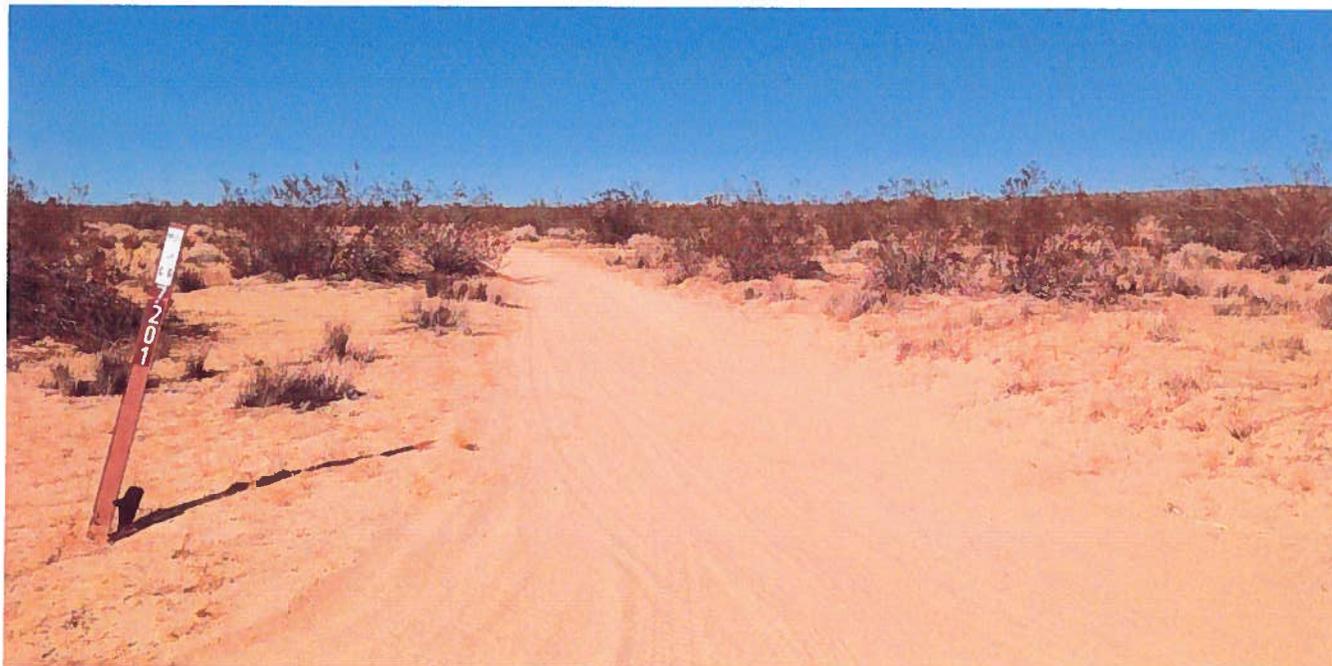
Date	Frame #	Camera Direction	Description	GPS/UTM Location	Township	Range	Sec.	Photo Point #
11/13/2014		NW	Facing route 7202, not a road	35.044093 N 117.096278 W	11 N	2 W	16	1
10/29/2014		NE	Facing route 7201, not a road	35.031765 N 117.100777 W	11 N	2 W	21	2
2/2/2015		NE	Owl Canyon campground	35.021578 N 117.021667 W	11 N	2 W	19	3
2/2/2015	1	NE	Along Owl Canyon Loop; parking lot	35.030645 N 117.033597W	11 N	2 W	24	4-1
2/2/2015	2	E	Looking at CG Owl Canyon Loop	35.030645 N 117.033597W	11 N	2 W	24	4-2
2/2/2015	1	E	180 view of natural area	35.073646 N 117.046987W	11 N	2 W	2	5-1
2/2/2015	2	S	180 view of natural area	35.073646 N 117.046987W	11 N	2 W	2	5-2
2/2/2015	3	W	180 view of natural area	35.073646 N 117.046987W	11 N	2 W	2	5-3
2/2/2015		NE	Opportunities for solitude	35.066200 N 117.112761 W	11 N	2 W	8	6
2/2/2015		E	Along 7201	35.043436 N 117.078772 W	11 N	2 W	15	7
2/2/2015		N	Mining activity	35.097948 N 117.067442 W	11 N	2 W	11	8
2/2/2015		North	Large denuded area from OHV use	35.059456 N 117.012511 W	11 N	2 W	8	9

CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Photo point 1-- Route 7202 was found to be primitive and is in a wash, reducing its visual impact on the unit. 11/13/2014



Photo point 2-- Primitive route 7201, was not constructed mechanically. 10/29/2014



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Photo point 3-- This picture, facing north, is of Owl Canyon Campground which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and contributes to the unnaturalness of section 193-2. The campground and Rainbow Basin Access Road dominate the landscape in this region of the unit. 2/2/2015



Photo point 4-- Frame 1 - Facing northeast along Owl Canyon Loop, a maintained access road going to the center of Rainbow Basin Natural Area is heavily used by the public. 2/2/2015



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Photo point 4-- Frame 2- Facing east, along Owl Canyon Loop, a maintained access road going to the center of Rainbow Basin Natural Area. 2/2/2015



Photo point 5-- Frame 1- 180° view, east to west. The land is primarily affected by the forces of nature. 2/2/2015



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

**Photo point 5-- Frame 2- 180° view, east to west. The land is primarily affected by the forces of nature.
2/2/2015**



**Photo point 5-- Frame 3- 180° view, east to west. The land is primarily affected by the forces of nature.
2/2/2015**



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Photo point 6--Facing northeast, the vastness of the unit provides many outstanding opportunities for solitude. 2/2/2015



Photo point 7--Facing east, designated route CG7201 runs within a wash and valley. Despite the route, the land remains primarily affected by the forces of nature. 2/2/2015



CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

Photo point 8--Facing north toward the unit's boundary, large amounts of mining are present along with numerous routes which denude sections within the northern region of 193-2. 2/2/2015.



Photo point 9-- Facing north near the radar tower in the eastern region of the polygon, are campsites and large denuded areas from off-highway vehicle use, both of which detract from naturalness within 193-2. 2/2/2015



1979 Inventory Summary

COMMENTS RECEIVED RELATED TO STUDY PHASE FACTORS
Comments received related to study phase factors.

AREA 193

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's southern border is a buried telephone cable and maintenance road (Fossil Bed Road). The northern boundary is a curving, maintained dirt road connecting the cable road, Coolgardie Camp, and Copper City Road, which is the eastern boundary.

72

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 60 percent public lands with a block of approximately 8000 acres located in the center. Non-public lands are in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes a convoluted group of hills of highly eroded, richly colored sedimentary strata. To the north is an elevated plateau of Joshua Tree woodland. Sloping alluvium to the west and south of the hills contains Creosote Scrub vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

BLM maintains a 31-space improved campground in Owl Canyon near Fossil Bed Road in the south-central region. In neighboring Rainbow Basin, which has been designated as a Natural Landmark, a maintained loop provides access to this area, where the richly colored sedimentary layers have yielded notable fossils. Off-road vehicle use is the predominant form of recreation in the area. Impacts from this type of use are substantially noticeable wherever access is possible through the canyons, over the less rocky slopes, and across the alluvial areas. North of the hills, the Joshua Tree Woodland is laced with ways. This has traditionally been a favorite recreation area, where roads and ways have had a significant impact upon the primeval character and influence of the land. Firepits, burnt Joshua Trees, and vehicle tracks dominate. Mining activity is limited to a few small prospects.

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

The canyons provide adequate screening from other visitors and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. A diversity in types of primitive recreation is also available. However, the area has been severely impacted throughout by the use of off-road vehicles. Ways which literally lace some portions of the roadless area severely limit potential for unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received point out the paleontological values and opportunities for solitude along with the presence of many impacts.

CA-080-193- Rainbow Basin

California Desert Wilderness Inventory Map, March 31, 1979

