

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: Valley Mountain CA-080-304-1

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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Approved by:

Name: _____

Title: Barstow Field Manager

Date: 12/10/13

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.

Year 2013 Valley Mountain CA-080-304-1

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): Valley Mountain CA-080-304-1

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
1990 California Statewide Wilderness Study Report, Cleghorn Lakes

Unit#/Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
304	26,912	Y	Y	Y	N/A
304	33,249	Y	Y	Y	Y

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

The inventory sources for this new unit explained today's Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness Area as well as the eastern portion of this unit. Both sources described the unit as being in a natural condition, having opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive recreation and both led to the that area being included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Both reports mentioned the nearness of the Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms and explained that the boundaries included a telephone line and a series of graded or dirt roads. However, it is worth noting that the 1979 report stated that public comments favored the further exploration of the area for mineral and energy possibilities. Also, the 1990 report recommended that the unit be released from wilderness consideration due to the mineral and energy reasons but managed for low and moderate intensity.

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-304-1 Valley Mountain

(1) Sufficient size

Acreage: Estimated at approximately 23,221 acres pending GIS calculation with a perimeter of roughly 33.2 miles.

Boundaries: This unit has an overall boxy shape that looks like a winter stocking hat that leans a tad east. The Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms serves as both the western and northern terminus while the eastern boundary is the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness Area. The southern boundary is a series of open routes and county dirt roads.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: The unit is predominantly public land with one state inholding totaling 640 acres and a series of private lands in the southern part of the unit that total approximately 400 acres.

Location: This area is located in south central San Bernardino County, roughly in the southeastern portion of the Barstow Resource Area. The area is located approximately one hundred and ten miles southeast of the City of Barstow and sixty miles northeast from the City of Palm Springs. The unit is immediately southeast of the Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms and north of Joshua Tree National Park. It is also a part of the area locally known as Wonder Valley.

Topography: A uniformly flat plain sprinkled with two hill structures. Surface in spots is similar to desert pavement that is also sandy in the wash areas.

Vegetation features: The dominant vegetation type throughout the area is creosote bush scrub.

Major human uses/activities: The major human use is Off Highway Vehicle with most traffic staying within the present route network. Other uses include target shooting and rock-hounding with no known mining claims active in the area.

(2) Natural condition

Yes

The unit appears to be mainly influenced by the forces of nature. Outside of the route network, there appears to be little evidence of illegal intrusions by OHV use.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

Yes

The hills section of the area offers the visitor the best opportunity for a solitary experience, however the whole unit offers a sense of solitude mainly due to the few people who live south of the unit and the overall low visitation to the area.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

Yes

The location of the unit offers the visitor opportunities for both types of recreation. The opportunity to rely on personal skills to travel and camp rather than on facilities or outside help exists for this area. The idea to provide opportunities for physical and mental challenges associated with adventure and self-direction as well as the personal growth that results from facing and overcoming obstacles is available in this area. The low level of visitation and distance from nearby housing adds into experience.

(5) Supplemental values

No

Appendix A

Photos of Area 304-1

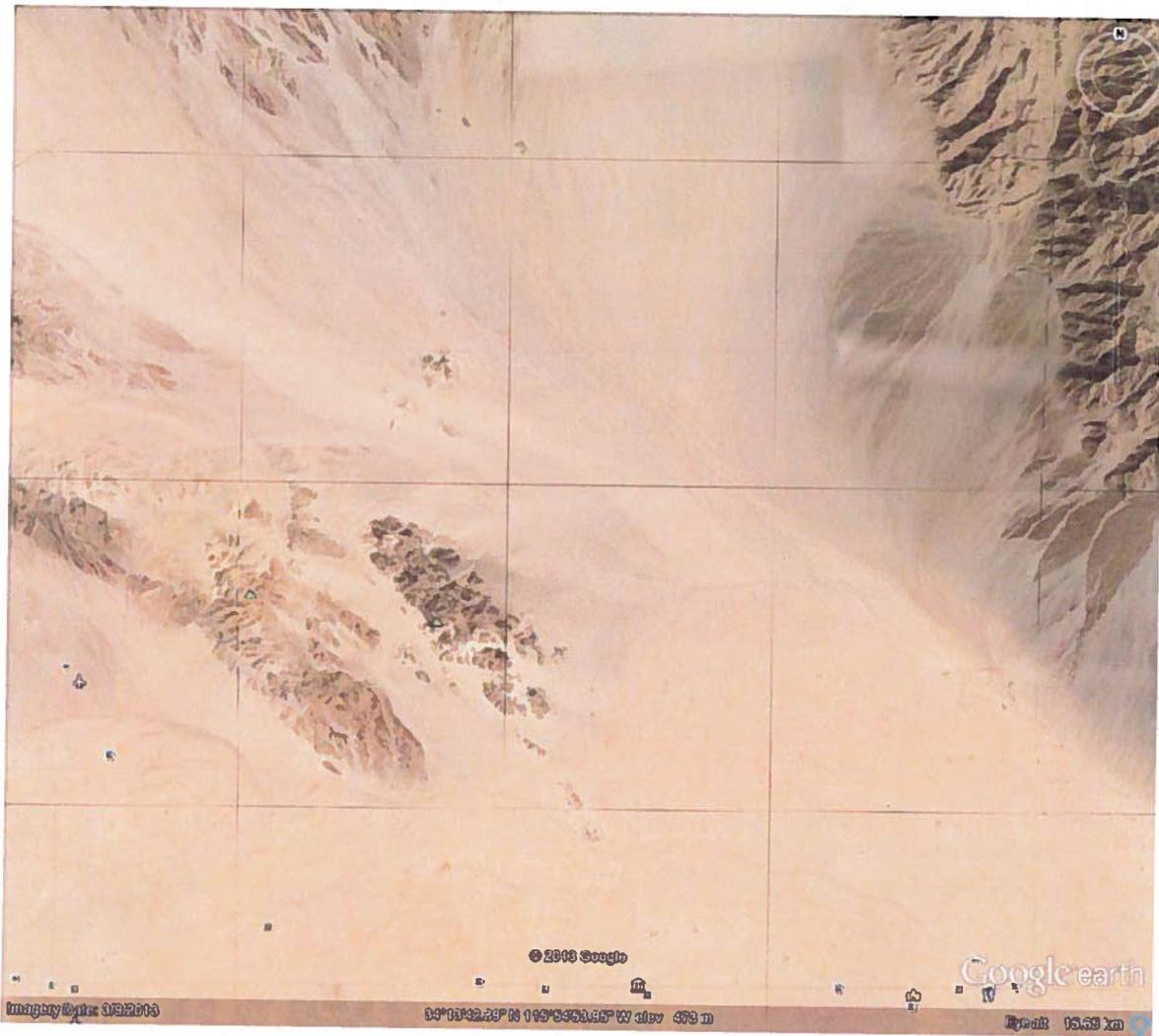


Photo #1 - Google Earth™ View of Area 304-1 Showing an Overview of Terrian



Photo #2 - View into Area 304-1



Photo #3 - View into Area 304-1



Photo #4 - View into Area 304-1



Photo #5 - View of Area 304-1

Appendix B

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

Written Description of Area 304

AREA 304

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has an odd shape due to its location adjacent to the Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms, which forms the western boundary. Other boundaries include a graded road into the military base to the north and Amboy Road to the east. The southern border is a telephone line support road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 80 percent public land. Non-public holdings occur in a checkerboard pattern near the eastern border, with scattered sections in the western one-half.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Landforms in the Bullion Mountains vary with rock type. The mountains contain both rugged, boulder, granitic rocks, and the more rounded metamorphic rocks. A large alluvial apron slopes eastward and westward on each side of the mountains. In the spring, the Cleghorn Lakes located in the interior of the Bullion Mountains are densely covered with fiddleneck. The rest of the area has a sparse cover of vegetation consisting mostly of cholla, creosote, and mixed shrubs.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The Bullion Mountains area generally retains its natural character throughout. Terrain variation in the mountain area and the overall size of the area screen out the influences of the few man-made features located within it. These features include a few primitive ways (one leading to the Cleghorn Lakes and a few in the Twentynine Palms area) and abandoned mines (including the Copper World Mine, of which only scattered debris remains). Overall, man's influence in the area is substantially unnoticeable. Excluded from further wilderness consideration is the area around Valley Mountain where scattered mining in the interior has reduced the apparent naturalness. Around the mountain, large areas have been substantially altered by off-road vehicle use. The boundary runs through the center of the large wash at the base of the Bullion Mountain bajada from the northwest corner of Section 2 (T. 2 N., R. 10 E.) to the southern end of Section 33 (T. 2 N., R. 11 E.). The narrow strip between Amboy Road and the Marine base boundary is also excluded.

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

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation occur within the area, especially in those portions where terrain variety provides visual screening. With both mountain and valley types of terrain in the area, primitive type recreation experiences can be either of the intimate, enclosed type or of the vast, open type. Opportunities for solitude are lacking in the small strip between Amboy Road and the Marine base boundary. No vegetative or topographic screening is available there.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments supported the findings and indicated potential for mineral and energy exploration.

AREA 304A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The western boundary consists of a military base right-of-way south from Bagdad and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base; the southern boundary is a combination of the Marine Corps base and a road running west from EM 607 in Section 9 (T. 4 N., R. 12 E.), at Amboy Road; the eastern border is Amboy Road; the northern boundary is Highway 66.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 60 percent public land. Private sections occur in strips but do not interrupt the contiguous block of public land.

Appendix C

Current Land Status Map of Area 304-1

Current Land Status of Area 304-1

