

## 6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

### Summary of Findings and Conclusion

**Unit Name and Number:** CA-080-252, Sleeping Beauty Mountains

#### 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:

##### Team Members:

Anthony Chavez Jr, Rangeland Management Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Rusty Gates, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Barstow Field Office

Jamie Livingood, Geologist, Barstow Field Office

Joan Patrovsky, Realty Specialist, Barstow Field Office

William Quillman, Supervisory Resource Management Specialist, Barstow Field Office

Tim Williamson, Wilderness Coordinator, Barstow Field Office

#### Approved by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Field Manager

Date: 6/22/13

*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.*

**Wilderness Inventory**  
**CDCA Wilderness Inventory Unit #252**  
**CA-080-252- Sleeping Beauty Mountains**  
**June 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 and released for other management considerations. 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. The Secretary then forwarded his recommendations to Congress which took action to designate wilderness areas and WSAs in the 1994 California Desert Protection Act.

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 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 search was done. The permanent inventory file for WIU #252 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](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](http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pdfs/cdd_pdfs.Par.aa6ec747.File.pdf/CA_Desert.pdf)), *the 1990 California Statewide Wilderness Study Report Part Volume 5 Sleeping Beauty Mountains CDCA-252* ([http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wilderness\\_pdfs/wsa/Volume-5/Sleeping%20Beauty%20Mountains.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wilderness_pdfs/wsa/Volume-5/Sleeping%20Beauty%20Mountains.pdf)), and the *2000 Surface Management Status Desert Access Guide: Soda Mountains*. Two field reconnaissance trips were made on July 25, 2012 and on May 16, 2013 to record and photograph the unit's environmental situation. The trips involved driving designated routes within and the state highway and other designated routes around the perimeter of the unit to help redefine the 1979 boundaries. Also at that time photographs were taken and a route analysis was conducted to help evaluate the current conditions.

Year 2012    Inventory Unit Number/Name    CA-080-252, Sleeping Beauty Mountains

### 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, BLM Barstow FO

**Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s):** CA-080-252, Sleeping Beauty Mountains

**Map Name(s)/Number(s):** USDI BLM CASO 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, Beauty Mountains

Unit#/Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Unique & Supplemental Values? Y/N
252	18,333	Y	Y	Y	N/A
252	33,110	Y	Y	Y	N/A

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

In 1979 approximately sixty percent of the land in this roadless area was public lands. The triangle-shaped area was bordered on all three sides by transmission lines with a gas line added to the southern boundary. While the northern section and interior sections were undisturbed by human activities, there was ample evidence of mining activities (shafts, prospect holes and scars) in the area that helped indicate that nature did not wholly shape the environment. The variety of terrain in the hills offered outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation. Vegetation in the area was sparsely scattered and consisted of cacti, creosote and mixed shrubs. Public comments at this time about the area were against further wilderness consideration and the inventory map indicated only part of this area had lands that possessed wilderness values. The 1990 Wilderness Study Report found similar results to the 1979 inventory. Naturalness, outstanding solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation were all present. It was not recommended for wilderness for the reasons that the grazing allotment was still active, the historic recreational uses and for the many mining claims that still existed in the unit.

## **Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions**

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-252, Sleeping Beauty Mountains

### **(1) Sufficient size:**

Yes.

The area currently having wilderness characteristics encompasses the northern and interior parts of the 1979 area. While the 1979 inventory indicated a sixty percent public lands ownership within this area, the current mapping indicates that total today to be closer to ninety percent. Additional lands were donated to BLM in 2001 and 2005 and through a Land and Water Conservation Fund exchange with the Burlington National Santa Fe railroad company also in 2001.

**Acreage:** Estimated at approximately 48,864 acres pending a GIS calculation with a perimeter of roughly 37.9 miles.

**Boundaries:** This triangle shape area has three well defined boundaries. On the western side of the triangle, the border is three 500 kV electric transmission power-lines along with a well maintained designated service route (this route would be considered a road due to the regular maintenance evidenced) named BL 8685. The eastern boundary is a designated route (which may at one time have been regularly maintained but now appears that is not the case) named BL 7815. The aforementioned wooden power-line has been cut down (only a few poles remain but the bases are in evidence all along the route) and the most dominant feature on the landscape is the remains of the Tonopah and Tidewater historic railway. The southern boundary is a combination of an underground gas pipeline, a 500 kV electric transmission line and a well maintained service road named BL 8660.

### **Description of Current Conditions**

**Land ownership:** The area is mostly BLM public lands, with one state and seven private inholdings totaling roughly less than twelve percent of the area.

**Location:** This area is located forty miles east of the town of Barstow. It is north of Interstate 40 and south of Cady Mountains Wilderness Study Area. It is a triangle-shaped polygon with the southeastern end located north of Ludlow, California, the southwestern end located near Pisgah, California and the northern tip located about thirteen miles north central of these two locations.

### **Topography:**

**Vegetation features:** The dominate plant community is creosote scrub with only the low laying areas around Broadwell Lake being friendly to saltbush scrub plants. The creosote bush scrub is open and sparse with an abundance of bare soil between plants that gets more open and sparse as elevations increase. The most common plants in the area are: creosote bush, box thorn, brittlebush, cacti, and desert globemallow. Also in the area, in locations where there is pooling

of water is tamarisk or salt cedar. The dominate soil type is slightly alkaline to very alkaline which results in a coarse sandy loam. This was an area where Bighorn Sheep had traditionally inhabited moving between this location and the Cady Mountains. This habitat supports small mammals like ground squirrels, jackrabbits and coyotes. Nongame birds and ravens intermingle with insects, lizards and rattlesnakes while the dry lake bed supports an array of seasonal wildflowers in seasons of higher precipitation.

**Major human uses/activities:** Semi-primitive motorized recreation which includes all types of off-highway vehicular (ohv) use on designated routes. However in the location of the Broadwell Dry Lake there is evidence of open area ohv use. There are several Native American prehistoric sites eligible for national register within the area. There is also a grazing allotment slated for this area, however at time of publication it was vacant.

## **(2) Natural condition**

Yes

Most the area continues the previous assessments that the area is relatively undisturbed by modern human activities. However in several locations there are some unnatural situations and structures. A gas pipeline is within the southern segment for the duration of the polygon, within 100 feet. There is evidence of mining in at least four locations however all the mines located on public lands have no active claims and have not been industrially mined for some time. Lastly the Broadwell Dry Lake bed located along route BL 7815 is crisscrossed with OHV tracks. Outside these specific locations (which account for less than ten percent of the total area), much of the interior and northern sections of the area remain mostly structured by natural causes.

## **(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude**

Yes

There is little evidence of human use within the area, except for light four-wheel drive and motorcycle use on the routes and roads traversing the unit. The opportunity for solitude is outstanding, mostly as a result of the unit's large size and scant human use. Topographic and vegetative screenings are present in areas with hills and ridges; other areas have open vistas that are also devoid of the signs of human activity. The current vacancy of the grazing allotment also helps engender this feeling.

## **(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation**

Yes

There may be outstanding opportunities for birding when water is present and wildflower viewing after precipitation events. There are valleys and hills available which make for excellent opportunities for hiking, backpacking and horse-riding. Lastly there are many excellent locations to watch wildlife. The relative lack of visitors to the area, when compared to similar lands in the

vicinity, help create these opportunities. Anecdotal evidence of recreational activities indicates that most of the use occurs on the border routes or on the dry lake bed.

**(5) Unique and Supplemental values**

Yes

There are many different old mines in the area. These mines are attractions for rock-hounds and anyone else interested in California's rich mining history. The western boundary is located next to the historic Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, referred to as the T&T, which was a mining/borax railroad that went out of existence midcentury. Additionally the historic values of the Native American prehistoric sites increase the cultural value of this area.

## Appendix A

### Route Analysis of Area 252

WIU # 252

Date: 25 July 2012

Appendix C - Route Analysis

Evaluator(s): Rusty Gates & Tim Williamson

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
BL 8670	Transmission Line	Y	Y	Y	Bladed and Two side Berms	Y	M	Berms on two sides
BL 8685	Transmission Line	Y	Y	Y	Bladed and Two side Berms	Y	M	Berms on two sides
BL 9608	Transmission Line	Y	Y	Y	Bladed and Two side Berms	Y	M	Berms on two sides
BL 9740	Transmission Line	Y	Y	Y	Bladed and Two side Berms	Y	M	Berms on two sides
BL 9740A	Transmission Line	Y	Y	Y	Bladed and Two side Berms	Y	M	Berms on two sides
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track (that fades away)
BL 9740 Different Location	Recreation	N	N	Y	Berms on two sides	N	-	Route fades away
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track Cut-Off	N	-	Two Track
BL 7815	Old Road? Administrative Leads to In-holdings	Y	Y	Y	Bladed	Y	M	Berms on Two Sides

Route #	Purpose	ROW Y/N/UK	ROW In Use?	Constructed Mechanically	Type of Evidence	Improved Mechanically	Hand Tools Or Machinery	Type of Evidence
BL 9741	Recreation	N	N	UK	Two Track	N	-	Fades away
BL 9730	Recreation Old Mine Road?	N	N	UK	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
BL 9720	Recreation Old Mine Road?	N	N	UK	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
Unnamed	Inholding Access?	N	N	Y	Bladed	N	-	Two Track
Unnamed	Inholding Access?	N	N	Y	Bladed	N	-	Two Track
BL 9810	Recreation	N	N	N	No visual evidence	N	-	-
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
BL 8846	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
Unnamed	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
BL 8660	Underground pipeline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed & Berms	Y	M	Bladed and Berms
BL 8810	Powerline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed & Berms	Y	M	Bladed and Berms

Appendix B

Photo Log of Area 252



Photo #1 - Southwestern corner of Area 252



Photo #2 - Southwestern corner of Area 252



**Photo #3 - Southwestern corner of Area 252**



**Photo #4 - Western Boundary of Area 252**



Photo #5 - Western Boundary of Area 252



Photo #6 - Northern Boundary of Area 252



Photo #7 - Northern Boundary of Area 252



Photo #8 - Eastern Boundary of Area 252



Photo #9 - Eastern Boundary of Area 252



Photo #10 - Southern Boundary of Area 252

**Photo Log for Area 252**

<b>Photo #</b>	<b>GPS</b>	<b>Town &amp; Range</b>	<b>Dir</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	3848675 N 556115 E	T8N R6E Sec18	NE	Old partial lava field with creosote scrub, slopes, coarse loamy sand
2	3848675 N 556115 E	T8N R6E Sec18	N	Old partial lava field with creosote scrub, slopes, coarse loamy sand
3	3848675 N 556115 E	T8N R6E Sec18	E	Old partial lava field with creosote scrub, slopes, coarse loamy sand
4	3851271 N 558578 E	T8N R6E Sec 09	E	Wash w/ creosote scrub, slopes
5	3854009 N 561268 E	T8N R9E Sec 09	SE	Rocky & Hilly, sparse scrub creosote, dirt & coarse loamy sand
6	3862548 N 572955 E	T9N R7E Sec 01	SW	Flat, sand & rocks, saddle area between Mtns, creosote scrub, gravely loamy sand
7	3862548 N 572955 E	T9N R7E Sec 01	SE	Flat, sand & rocks, saddle area between Mtns, creosote scrub, gravely loamy sand
8	3858105 N 573981 E	T9N R7E Sec 24	S	Dry Lake Bed or Playa
9	3847952 N 576087 E	T8N R8E Sec 20	W	Flat plain, creosote scrub, coarse sandy loam w/ a dirt/rock/pebble mix
10	3845517 N 575148 E	T8N R8E Sec 31	NW	Mild uphill slope, rocky, gravely loamy sand, w/ creosote scrub

Appendix C

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

Written Description & Map of Area 252

### III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the scattered Mesquite Hills and sloping alluvial formation associated with the northern end of the Bristol Mountains. The northeast portion of the area is influenced by the Devils Playground area and contains areas of deep wind-deposited dune sand. The whole area is very low, with elevations ranging from 988 feet to 1300 feet on the alluvium to 1568 feet on Crucero Hill. Vegetation is sparse with scattered saltbush in the sandy locations and a Creosote Bush Scrub plant community on the southern rocky alluvium.

### IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is affected primarily by the forces of nature throughout. Ways are used by off-road vehicles, especially in the Mesquite Hills area, but are subject to rehabilitation by the blowing sand in the area, thus the wilderness condition is restored. The potential wilderness study area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary.

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

The vastness of the visible landscape and absence of man-made features provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unrestricted movement through a classic desert setting.

### VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments dealt with study phase considerations.

## AREA 252

### I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This triangle-shaped area is bounded completely by utility lines. The northern boundary of the Wilderness Study Area is the southern edge of the utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of the three existing transmission lines (except where a service road may extend outside the right-of-way); the eastern boundary a graded road and a telephone line right-of-way; and, the southern boundary, a powerline/gas line right-of-way, with associated maintenance road.

### II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 60 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring in alternating north-south strips.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area contains the South Cady Mountains. A large, sweeping bajada is located near the center, sloping eastward to Broadwell Dry Lake. Vegetation on the bajada is scattered and consists of cactus, creosote, and mixed shrubs. Except in the canyons and washes, vegetation in the mountains is sparse.

### IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is relatively undisturbed by man. Man's influence, which includes only a few primitive ways and a few abandoned mine shafts and prospect holes, is substantially unnoticeable due to the topographic screening in the hills. Much of the southern slope of the South Cady Mountains has been excluded from further wilderness consideration due to extensive mining scars which greatly impact naturalness. Both the Black Butte and the Argos Mines have been similarly excluded, along with the other mines on that southern slope. Other mining activity at the Old Dominion Mine and a short maintained road have also been excluded at the northernmost point of the roadless area.

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

The variety of terrain in the hills offers many outstanding opportunities for solitude by providing areas of seclusion and isolation. Size and terrain variety are also responsible for the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined

types of recreation. Visitors can experience both the intimacy of small, enclosed areas in the hills and canyons, and the vastness and openness of the large bajada between the South Cady Mountains and the Cady Mountains. The relative absence of internal man-made features also enhances opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

#### VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments referred to the presence of roads and ways; expressed interest in motorized recreation use, and pointed out potential mineral and energy resources. Roads and ways were evaluated and excluded from further wilderness consideration, where appropriate.

### AREA 253

#### I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located 23 miles west of the town of Baker, north of and abutting Interstate 15. The northern boundary is a powerline corridor right-of-way and associated access road. The southern boundary is Interstate 15. The eastern boundary is a maintained dirt road between Interstate 15 and the powerlines.

#### II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Every other section of this area is non-public land except for a small block at the northern tip. The area does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

#### III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Except for an area of low mountains in the northeast portion, the area is relatively flat. It is comprised mainly of a bajada that gently slopes to the south and west. The landscape has a gentle transition from the mountains to rolling hills to bajada to flat valley, which adds to scenic quality. The vegetation of this area is low desert shrub and a variety of annual plants. Creosote is the dominant plant throughout the area but becomes very sparse in the southern part of the area.

#### IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The roadless area has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable. No permanent improvements exist in the area.

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

In the small block of public land neither solitude nor unconfined recreation opportunity exist.

#### VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A few comments favored wilderness study status for the area. Several others stated the area was not natural.

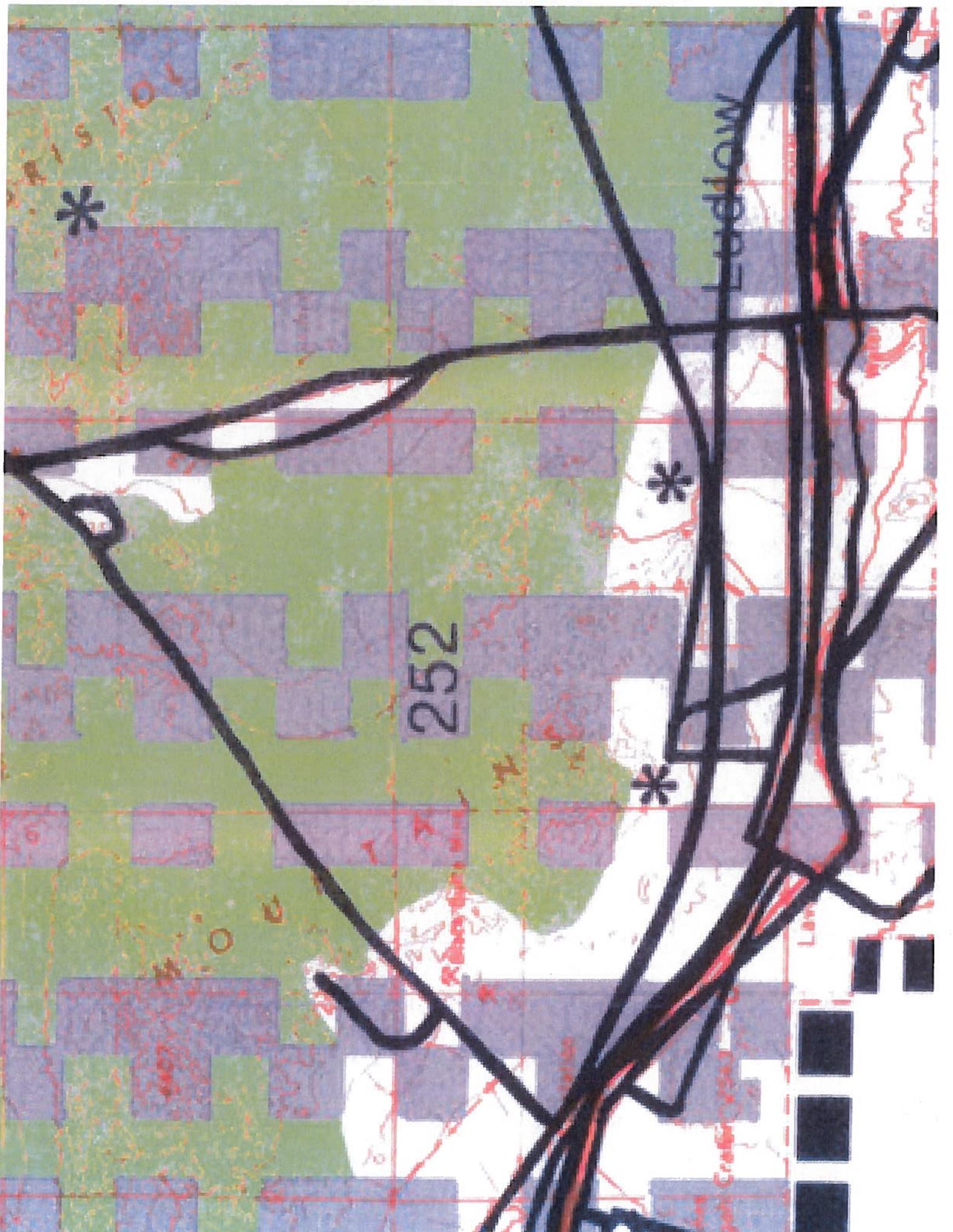
### AREA 254

#### I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bounded to the north by a gas/telephone line right-of-way; to the south, by the Marine Corps Training Center at Twentynine Palms; to the east, by a Marine Corps Base right-of-way; and, to the west, by a graded road to the active Stedman Mine.

#### II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is approximately 70 percent public land with non-public holdings occurring in north-south strips of alternating odd sections.



252

Ludlow

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Legend

Sandy Creek 2554

Appendix D

Current Land Status Map of Area 252

