

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: Granite Mountains CA-080-210

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: Field Manager

Date: 6/27/12

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 #210
Granite Mountains CA-080-210
June 21st, 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 2I 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 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 experience, in either case wilderness characteristics would now be present and the agency may have to manage these lands for their wilderness potential.

As part of the preparation of this wilderness update, a records research was done. The permanent inventory file for WIU #210 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 2007 Big Bear Lake Desert Access Guide (DAG), the 2008 Newberry Springs Desert

Access Guide (DAG), the 1998 San Bernardino Desert Access Guide (DAG), the 2012 Victorville Desert Access Guide (DAG) and the Stoddard Valley Sub Region Off Highway

Vehicle West Mojave Supplement Map which showed open travel routes on BLM administered lands. A field reconnaissance trip was made on May 31, 2013 to record and photograph the unit's environmental situation. The trip involved driving designated routes within and county roads and other designated routes around the perimeter of the unit to help redefine the 1979 boundaries. Also at that time photographs were taken to help evaluate the current conditions.

Year 2013 Inventory Unit Number/Name Granite Mountains CA-080-210

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 210

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
210	N/A	N	N	Y	N/A

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

The 1979 California Desert Conservation Area inventory unit number 210 covered a large area northwest of the Community of Lucerne Valley and had a complex perimeter. The boundary system included a host of unlabeled dirt roads and various utility lines and following it in the present day was challenging. Area 210 included the Granite Mountains, Fairview Valley, and the lands around the communities of Lucerne and Apple Valley. It was estimated that just over thirty percent of the land was privately owned and that the public lands were scattered in separate parcels within this area. The Granite Mountains had several peaks in the range that topped out at over 4800 feet, while there are also several valleys that fell to around 3000 feet. The valleys were dominated with creosote scrub plant communities while a few small Joshua Tree plant systems could be found at higher elevations. Opportunities for solitude were nonexistent while primitive and unconfined recreation could only be found in the hills and mountains.

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name: Granite Mountains CA-080-210

(1) Sufficient size

Acreage: The rough estimate of Area 210 is 67,082 acres pending a GIS calculation with a perimeter of 41.8 miles long. Within this area, roughly fifty-seven percent or 38,061 acres are public land.

Boundaries: This area did not have well defined boundaries for the western and northern borders for the 1979 inventory so an effort was made to find boundaries that could be identified at a later date. Moving clockwise around the area, the northern boundary started on Johnson Road a maintained dirt road which turns into designated route SV 2630 and finishes on Spinel Road. The eastern boundary is state highway 247. The southern boundary starts on Rabbit Springs Road just north of the community of Lucerne Valley and continues on state highway 18. The western boundary begins on Joshua Road in the midst of residential housing in the town of Apple Valley, turns onto Waalew Road and continues onto Central Road.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: The current boundaries contain more private lands than did the previous inventory. Just over fifty percent of the land within this area is managed by the BLM. Private lands dominate much of the surrounding border areas with much residential housing near both Lucerne Valley and Apple Valley. While there is contiguous public lands in this area, private lands separate some plots into small parcels and the connection of these lands are pinched in two key locations. Lastly, private lands are found within and thus surrounded by public lands in a few locations. A limited use class exists for much of the BLM lands in this area, however moderate use class was assigned for Fairview Mountain and the BLM lands around Lucerne Lake (dry) are listed as unclassified.

Location: Area 210 is located in San Bernardino County east of Interstate 15. It is north and east of town of Apple Valley and north and west of the community of Lucerne Valley. The name sake of the area is the mountain range in the middle however this area includes valleys and two dry lake beds. The area has many small parcels of public land that are separated from the large section and these are either wholly surrounded by private lands or are peninsulas in private lands.

Topography: This is an interesting area where hills and mountains are interspersed with valleys that contain a dry playa on each side. The Granite Mountains sit in the middle of the area and top out at 4,950 feet while a low elevation of 2,850 feet exists on Lucerne dry lake. The base of this area alters rapidly from the hills and mountains to a series of canyons and passes that connect the area east to west. The mountainous area lies rough and rugged with water often difficult to find throughout the whole section. The soil composition changes from Residuum weathered granite, to Cajon gravelly sand, to the pebbly sandy loam, to dry lake beds which are Bousic clay based and a fine sandy loam. This is a dirt/sand mix with rocks scattered at higher

elevations. Temperatures in the area range from below freezing in January to 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more in July.

Vegetation features: The dominant vegetation type at the lower elevations is Creosote bush scrub. Creosote ranges from scarce with spots of bare ground to closer with places of various grass species. In addition to creosote; white bur-sage, brittlebush and cheese-bush with an array of seasonal wildflowers. This habitat supports coyotes, desert rodents, ground squirrels, jack rabbits, quail, owls, ravens, wrens and reptiles. In two locations Saltbush scrub vegetation can be found near the two dry lakebeds. At higher elevations a few Joshua Tree communities can be found with a supporting black-bush scrub plants scattered in the mountains.

Major human uses/activities: The major recreational use is motorized recreation which includes all types of off-highway vehicular (OHV) use on designated routes. Other recreational uses include camping (dispersed camping is also evidenced throughout the area), target shooting (again there is evidence of this activity throughout the area), climbing, hiking, wildlife study and hunting. The area does not have a grazing allotment but there are many historic mines and pits in the area that attract public interest. The private lands surrounding that make up less than half of the area are residential in nature with housing of all kinds present.

(2) Natural condition

No

A large portion of the area has seen the influence of humans. From developed roads and routes, to recreational uses which have left an imprint on the landscape. The public lands come to key pinch points where the contiguous necessity of a constant landform is interrupted by transportation corridors or by human activities which have taken away the naturalness of the area. Travel through the area results in seeing human impacts throughout, either in the immediacy of the environment or in the panoramic viewshed of the region. Outside portions of the northern section or in between the mountains of this area, the natural condition is one of human based not of naturally occurring conditions.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

No

Both the mountainous bases and the valleys have more dwellings and residents living in the vicinity. The feeling of solitude is entirely lacking throughout the area due to this presence of the surrounding communities and the recreational choices that occur within the region.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

No

The area has a handful of major OHV routes (both legal and illegal) and a host of locations known for recreational target shooting that when combined make primitive recreation pursuits

difficult. Most of the recreational pursuits occur in a manner so as to leave the wilderness characteristics impaired for future use and thus impair their ability to become future wilderness lands.

(5) Supplemental values

No

The region has numerous sites of mining, however the recreational choices of the region's users has denuded the historic values associated with these sites. OHV tracks, garbage dumping, recreational target shooting and paintball remains have cleansed the area of its historic nature.

Appendix A

Route Analysis of Area 210

WIU #210

Appendix C - Route Analysis

Date: 05/31/13

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
Unnamed Route	Powerline	Y	Y	Y	Bladed & Two Sided Berms	Y	M	Bladed & Two Sided Berms
Unnamed Two Track	Private Land Access	Y	Y	Y	Berms on two sides	Y	M	Berms
Unnamed Route	Recreation Limited Use	N	N	Y	Two Track with slight Berms	N	-	Two Track
Unnamed Route	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
SV 2672	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
SV 2630	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
SV 5904	Private Land Access	Y	Y	Y	Hardpack & Berms	Y	M	Hardpack and berms
SV 2611	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
Unnamed Route	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
SV 2616	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track
SV 2612	Recreation	N	N	N	Two Track	N	-	Two Track

* This is an incomplete route analysis, not all routes were seen during one day assessment.

** There are a host of two tracks within this area that cannot be found on the Vehicle West Mojave Supplement Maps. Not all of these unnamed routes and two tracks were mentioned in the report above.

*** This is a large area that also has many maintained county roads (both pavement and dirt). No route analysis was performed for county maintained roads.

Appendix B

Photo Log of Area 210



Photo #1 - Unnamed Two Track South of Spinel Street - Southwestern View



Photo #2 - Designated Route SV 2630 - Southern View



Photo #3 - Junction of Kendal, Cove and Gubar Roads - Northwestern View



Photo #4 - Junction of Solebad Road and State Highway 18 - Northern View



Photo #5 - Junction of Laguna Seca and South Roads - Southeastern View



Photo #6 - Unnamed Two Track at end of Apache Trail - Northern View



Photo #7 - Unnamed Two Track Near Fairview Valley - Northeastern View



Photo #7 - Unnamed Two Track Near Fairview Valley - Southeastern View

Photo Log for Area 210

Photo #	GPS	Town & Range	Dir	Description
1	3825183 N 502566 E	T 6 N R 1 W Sec 34	SW	Unnamed two track south of Spinel Street in Valley/Basin, creosote scrub plant community, sandy pebbly loam
2	3826611 N 499169 E	T 6 N R 1 W Sec 29	S	Designated Route SV2630, rocky two track in places, creosote scrub plant community, pebbly sandy loam
3	3813787 N 502903 E	T 4 N R 1 W Sec 3	NW	Junction of Kendall, Cove and Gubar Roads, open plain, grasses and shrubs, pebbly sandy loam, edge of residential community
4	3814478 N 491343 E	T 5 N R 2 W Sec 33	SE	Solebad Drive and State Highway 18, maintained dirt road, foothill of mountains, pebbly sandy loam, creosote scrub plant community
5	3823138 N 488894 E	T 5 N R 2 W Sec 6	SE	Junction of Laguna Seca Road and South Road, maintained dirt roads, creosote scrub plant community, pebbly sandy loam
6	3824213 N 490608 E	T 6 N R 2 W Sec 32	N	Unnamed two track at end of Apache Trail, base of small hills, creosote scrub plant community and grasses, near mounds of contractor trash, pebbly sandy loam
7	3827012 N 489393 E	T 6 N R 2 W Sec 29	NE	Unnamed two track within Fairview Valley, creosote scrub plant community, grasses, sandy pebbly loam
8	3827012 N 489393 E	T 6 N R 2 W Sec 29	SE	Unnamed two track within Fairview Valley, creosote scrub plant community, grasses, sandy pebbly loam, facing towards dry lake bed

Appendix C

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

Written Description & Map of Area 210

alterations of the landscape include heavy mining in the mountains south of Taylor Spring and near Quill Spring. A private dwelling is located about one mile south of Quill Spring. Roads to these sites are apparently maintained. After extensive field investigation, the area was found to contain many portions which have been substantially altered by the works of man. Several working mines with habitations are present and a network of roads dissect the area into confining sections.

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

Within the mountainous portions, secluded areas provide a strong feeling of isolation; however, the continuous presence of man and his permanent works limit potential for solitude and unconfined movement.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments indicated the presence of mining and other permanent improvements as well as a high potential for primitive recreation.

AREA 210

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has very complex borders. Running clockwise around the area, starting from the intersection of Highway 247 and the northern boundary, they are as follows: Highway 247, a steel-structure powerline; Highway 18; a blacktop and graded dirt road into Fairview Valley; a maintained dirt road across the west side of Reed Dry Lake north around Fairview Mountain and west to an intersection with a maintained dirt road which is the northern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is 68 percent public lands with scattered sections of non-public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes the Granite Mountains, Fairview Valley, and portions of North Lucerne Valley and Lucerne Valley. The Granite Mountains and Sidewinder Mountain in 210A are a continuous block of mountains approximately thirteen miles in length and three to six miles in width. Maximum altitude is 5272 feet on Sidewinder Mountain, which is separated from the Granite Mountains by a narrow (4000 feet) pass which is the northern border of Area 210. Several peaks throughout the length of this group of mountains attain altitudes of 4800 feet. The group is made up of decomposed granite and supports a Joshua Tree Woodland plant community on more gentle slopes where exposure and soil depth allow. The valley floors surrounding this block of mountains range in elevation between 3000 feet and 3400 feet. These are extremely flat valleys creating an easily discernible interface between valley and lower mountain slopes. The valleys support a Creosote Scrub plant community.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made features significantly alter the primeval character and influence of the land over much of the area, particularly in Fairview Valley. Virtually all of the land in Fairview Valley is in private ownership. The area is no longer affected primarily by the forces of nature. Permanent improvements, such as graded two-lane dirt roads and dense human habitation, are evident throughout the valley. Reed Dry Lake, which is without structures, is altered by the presence of ways which are substantially noticeable. On the east side of the area, several dwellings are located on private land along Highway 247 from Sunset Cove to the intersection with Lucerne Valley Cutoff. In contrast to the valley floors, where man and his own works dominate the landscape, the Granite Mountains constitute an area where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man.

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

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are lacking in the valley portions of the area due to the numerous homes and roads. Solitude is also entirely lacking. The mountainous portion does provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation though solitude is lacking due to the dense and immediate presence of man on all sides.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many comments were received. The majority indicated that man's presence detracted from wilderness qualities. Others supported inclusion of a small area.

AREA 210A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the west by Central Road, Stoddard Hill Road, and a mining railroad spur; on the north, by a pipeline road right-of-way; on the east, by Lucerne Valley Cutoff and Highway 247; and, on the south by a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The roadless area is more than 50 percent non-public land although public lands occur mostly in one block.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area includes Sidewinder Mountain, Black Mountain, and portions of Sidewinder Valley and North Lucerne Valley. The maximum altitude is 5272 feet on Sidewinder Mountain, while elevations on the valley floors range from 3000 to 3400 feet. The mountains consist of decomposed granite and support a Joshua Tree Woodland plant community on more gentle slopes where exposure and soil depth allow.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Man-made features significantly alter the primeval character and influence of the land over much of the area, particularly on Black Mountain and the lower northern slopes of Sidewinder Mountain. A railroad spur enters the area from the west to service a rock quarry atop Black Mountain. Maintained access roads and numerous ways in the vicinity of Black Mountain further impact the apparent naturalness. Scattered mining activity is evident on Sidewinder Mountain. In contrast to Black Mountain and the valley floors where man and his works dominate the landscape, a large portion of Sidewinder Mountain is disturbed by man.

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

This area is similar in character to Area 210 to the south, but that portion which retains its natural character is small in size; therefore, opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received are related to study phase factors.

AREA 211

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary is a spur of the Santa Fe Railroad and a large steel-structure powerline. The eastern border is a maintained road through Grapevine Canyon. The western border is a graded road (Bowen Ranch Road) through Arrastre Canyon and Forest Service Road 3N14. The southern boundary is the San Bernardino National Forest.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is 80 percent public lands with non-public lands located along the northern border.

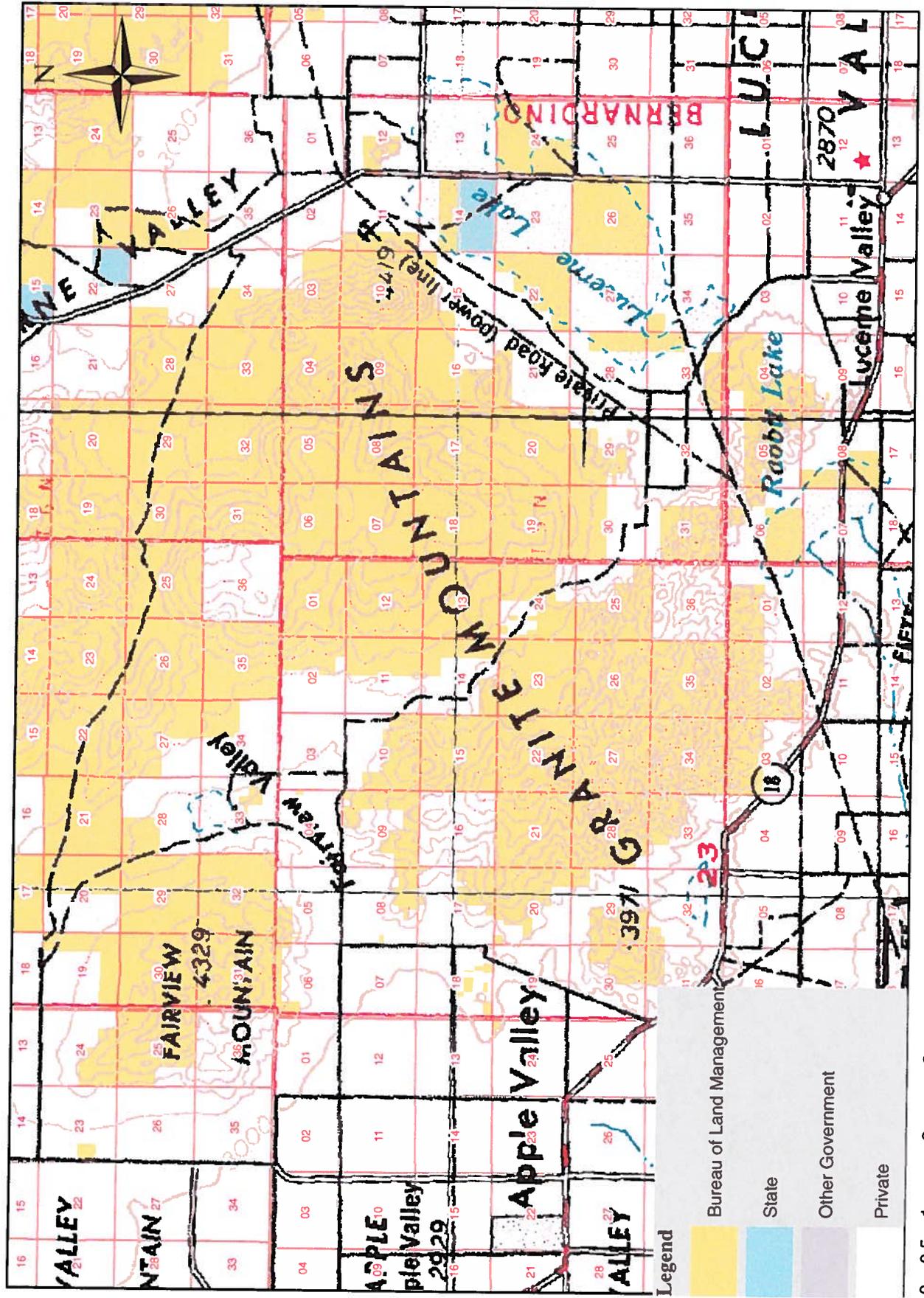
III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The area consists of a section of foothills of the northern San Bernardino Mountains and a portion of the south slope of Fifteen Mile Valley between Lucerne Valley and Apple Valley. The foothills consist of rugged canyons and huge boulders and support a Pinyon-Juniper woodland above 4000 feet. Joshua Tree Woodland, some Shadscale Scrub,

Appendix D

Current Land Status Map of Area 210

Current Land Status Map of Area 210 - Granite Mountains



0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles