

6301 - Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: East Ord Mountains CA-080-208

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).

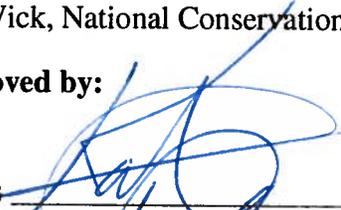
The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

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Name: 

Title: Barstow Field Manager

Date: 12/12/13

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 East Ord Mountains CA-080-208

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): East Ord Mountains CA-080-208

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
208	N/A	N	N	N	N/A

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

The boundaries of the area included Camp Rock Road, steel powerlines, a gas pipeline and an unnamed dirt road. There were mining operation impacts on the lower slopes; and scarring from mine access roads on alluvial formations around mountain. Impacts from off-highway vehicles were in southern end of the area, adjacent to Johnson valley OHV area. Man-made improvements were visible from within the area. Some challenges for primitive recreation; unconfined movement inhibited by substantial mining activity while activities in and around the roadless area limit opportunities for solitude. There were public comments which indicated numerous mining scars and visible evidence of off-highway vehicle use all over the area. Other comments indicated the area had outstanding primitive recreation potential. The area was dropped from study because of numerous activities and impacts noted in additional field checks.

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name: CA-080-208 East Ord Mountains

(1) Sufficient size

Acreeage: Estimated at approximately 87,127 acres pending GIS calculation with a perimeter of roughly 55.6 miles.

Boundaries: The area is bordered on the east and north by Camp Rock Road; to the south, by a steel-structure powerline right-of-way. The west boundary is a gas pipeline and maintenance road. A section of the border between the powerline and pipeline is defined by a maintained dirt road.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: The eastern and northern half of the area are public lands with the southern and western half being mostly public. Roughly about 30 percent of the area is privately held.

Location: About 15 miles south-east of Barstow, between the Newberry Mountains Wilderness and the Johnson Valley OHV area. This is the third and eastern most of the Ord Mountains.

Topography: East Ord Mountain rises to 6068 feet from the surrounding alluvium. Elevations on the alluvium range between 3,400' and 4,200' feet at southern end and between 3,800' and 4,200' on north end. Alluvium on the west side of the mountain, and alluvium from Ord Mountain form an elongated enclosed valley between them which drains to the southwest.

Vegetation features: Mountain slopes and much of the alluvium are covered with a creosote shrub plant community. Other popular plants include Yucca and several species of cholla cactus. Vegetation on the alluvial fans is much denser with larger shrubs. Plant size, density and dispersion are based on soil types and moisture. Vegetation is sparse and grows slowly in rocky outcrops and steep areas; while larger and denser on stable soils around base of mountain, and in drainages where more moisture is available.

Major human uses/activities: Visible evidence of continued vehicle access to mining areas on south-east side of mountain. There are a series of crisscrossing OHV routes in the flat areas of the southern end, between mountain and powerline road. The mining sites appear abandoned and stripped of related structures and material. There are also a few constructed roads leading up to these mine sites. Many of the previous vehicle ways and incursions were restored in this area in the late 1990's as part of a large area wide restoration effort. As a result the unit has areas that appear more natural than in earlier inventories.

(2) Natural condition

Yes

The southeastern portion does not appear natural because of visible impacts from mining and crisscrossing OHV routes. Excluding the southern portion, the remainder of the area appears in a natural condition. The southern portion between the mountain and the powerline road is crisscrossed with OHV routes and continued on-going vehicle use. The mining activity and related roads on the southeastern lower slope of the mountain appear historic since the mining claims have not been active for a number of years. The site is slowly returning to a more natural condition from erosion & weathering. From the southeast corner going north the eastside of the unit appears natural with few alterations and glimpses of scattered routes. The mountain range appears undisturbed overall on the north side. A route gets light use to an old mine site at the mountain base on north side, and is only visible while on route. The mine at the base on the north side is highly eroded and overgrown, therefore blends in. In general this section of the unit retains its natural appearance with the impacts of human use not detracting from the overall general natural condition.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

Yes

There are opportunities on the mountains and upland portions of the alluvial base. Moving up the mountains there are several canyons, plateaus and ridges from which no signs of outside activity are detectable.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

Yes

There are outstanding opportunities for rugged hiking, scramble climbing, hiking, photography, mountain climbing, scenic views, and wildlife watching for Bighorn Sheep or raptors.

(5) Supplemental values

No

Appendix A
Images of Area 208

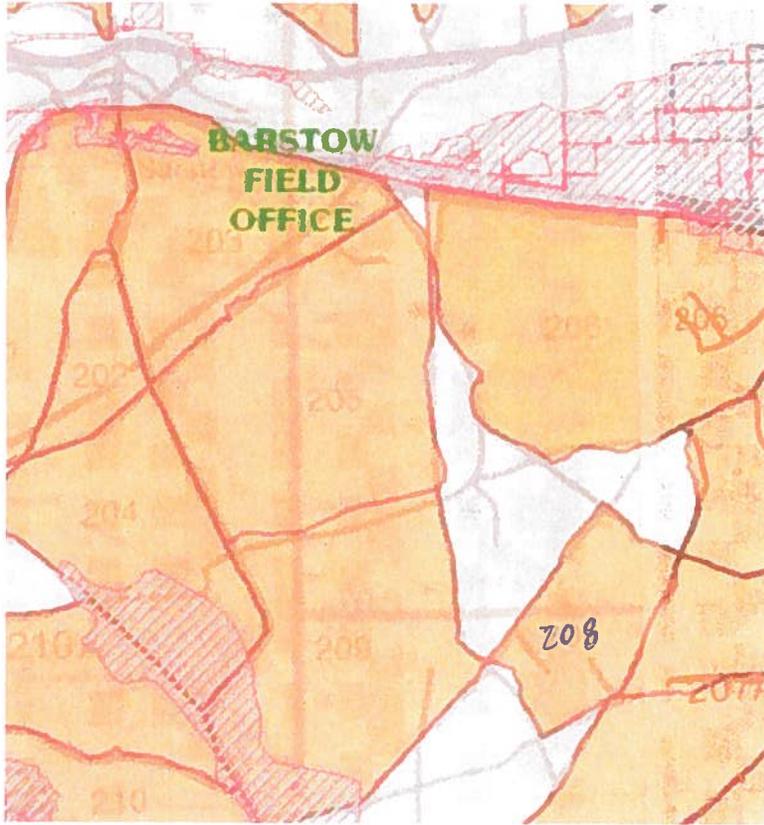


Image #1 - Area 208 relative to the City of Barstow and showing the boundaries of the unit

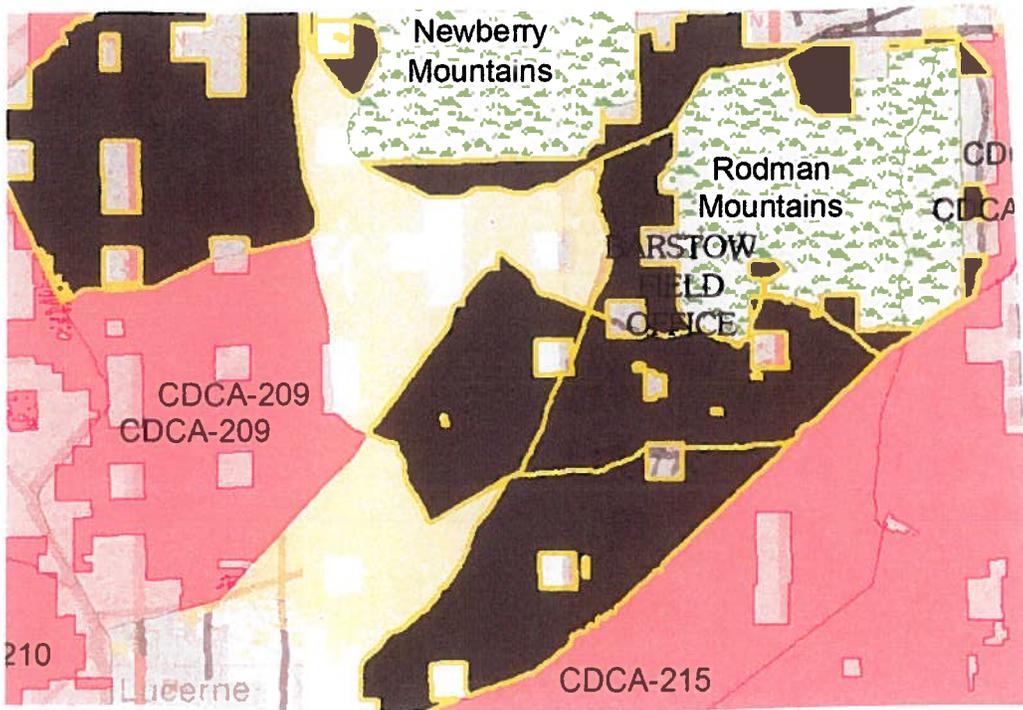


Image #2 - Area 208 is the Black Polygon located to the right of CDCA-209



Image #3 - Locations within Area 208 that were found to have Wilderness Qualities

Appendix B

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

Written Description of Area 208

areas of geological and historical significance. Surprise Canyon contains many examples of rock art in the form of petroglyphs, as do rocks around the Deep Tank area. Of interest geologically are the cinder cone, lava flow, and eroded cliffs along the perimeter of the volcanic mesa.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments were in agreement with presence of solitude and uniqueness of the terrain.

AREA 207A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area has as its southern and eastern boundaries steel-structure powerline right-of-ways and accompanying maintenance roads. The western boundary is Camp Rock Road, and the northern boundary is a maintained dirt road from Camp Rock Road to Surprise Canyon and further east to connect with the eastern boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area is approximately 70 percent public lands. Non-public holdings occur in north-south strips of alternating sections.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The boundaries encompass Target Peak, the highest portion of the Rodman Mountains, and surrounding alluvium. Scattered low hills south and west of Target Peak are associated with the northern end of the Fry Mountains. The Creosote Bush Scrub community is represented on the alluvium while a transitional type, indicating the Joshua Tree Woodland, is evident at higher elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Large-scale mining activity has occurred in the western portion at Copper Strand Mine and Stark Mine. These are located in the low scattered hills south and west of Target Peak and are highly visible scars upon the landscape. Ways to these apparently abandoned operations further detract from the primeval character and influence of the area. A communications site is located atop Target Peak and is apparent throughout the entire area. The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable throughout the area, making it unsuitable for further wilderness consideration.

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

Opportunities are limited due to the impact of man-made improvements upon the landscape.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment stated the area was not natural.

AREA 208

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is bordered on the east and north by Camp Rock Road; to the south, by a steel-structure powerline right-of-way. The west boundary is a gas pipeline and maintenance road. A section of the border between the powerline and pipeline is defined by a maintained dirt road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Public lands constitute approximately 65 percent of the area in strip-pattern ownership.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

East Ord Mountain and a one-to-two-mile-wide alluvial slope surrounding it are the dominant physical features of the area. Covering one square mile in the upper right hand corner is a small isolated hill rising approximately 350 feet from the alluvium. Elevations on the alluvium range between 3400 feet and 3800 feet at the southern extreme and from 3800 feet to 4200 feet at the extreme northern end. Alluvium on the west side of the mountain and alluvium from Ord Mountain form an elongated enclosed valley between these mountains, which drains to the southwest. East Ord Mountain rises to 6068 feet from the surrounding alluvium. The mountain is sparsely vegetated with stunted Mojave yucca and a scattering of desert shrubs. Vegetation on the alluvial fans is much denser. Here, healthy Mojave yucca and dense desert shrub of the Joshua Tree Woodland plant community provide complete ground cover. The area is not highly eroded, but maintains relatively smooth, though often steep, contours.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The alluvial formations around the mountain are scarred from formerly maintained roads which were used as access to several mines on the lower slopes of the mountain. These mining operations are apparently inactive, with the exception of the Grandview Mine in the southeastern corner of the area, which is still an active claim. Other mining impacts are found in the interior of the area in the large east-facing canyon just north of the Grandview Mine and at the Maume Mine in the north end. Impacts from off-road vehicles are also substantially noticeable in the southern end of the area, which is adjacent to the Johnson Valley area designated as "open" to vehicle use.

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

Man-made improvements are visible from within the area. The area provides some challenges for primitive recreation, although unconfined movement across the area is inhibited by the substantial mining activity. Ongoing activities in and around the roadless area limit opportunities for solitude.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Some comments indicated numerous mining scars and visible evidence of off-road vehicle use. Other comments indicated the area has outstanding primitive recreation potential. The area was dropped from further study as numerous activities and impacts were noted from additional field examinations.

AREA 209

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area's northern boundary is a maintained dirt road accompanying a gas pipeline. The eastern border is two gas pipeline roads. The southern border is a steel-structure powerline, and the western border is adjacent to Area 247.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 40 percent of the area is non-public land scattered throughout in both large and small blocks.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

West Ord Mountain and Goat Mountain are the prominent features of the area. Along the southeastern border is an alluvial terrace sloping generally southwest toward North Lucerne Valley, the southern end of which occupies the south end of the area. The mountains are sparsely vegetated with low desert shrubs and some areas of higher Joshua Tree Woodland dominated by Mojave yucca. At the highest point, the mountain reaches 5525 feet, while the floor of North Lucerne Valley lies at approximately 3000 feet.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable in some areas. North Lucerne Valley is almost entirely in private ownership. Wood pole utility lines and dwellings dot the Valley with associated access roads and other developments which serve to alter the primeval character and influence of the land. In the northwest corner, on Goat Mountain, is a microwave relay tower that is well-screened from most angles. Other

Appendix C

Current Land Status Map of Area 208

Current Land Status of Area 208

